

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 419 424

FL 025 271

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TITLE A Survey of the Implementation of the Literacy Component of the First Steps Project in WA.
INSTITUTION Western Australia Education Dept., Perth.
ISBN ISBN-0-7309-6270-9
PUB DATE 1995-00-00
NOTE 113p.; For other items in the "First Steps Project," see FL 025 269-272.
AVAILABLE FROM Heinemann, 361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801.
PUB TYPE Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; *High Risk Students; Inservice Teacher Education; *Literacy Education; Numeracy; Parent Attitudes; Principals; Program Effectiveness; *Program Implementation; *Staff Development; State Surveys; Tables (Data); Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Australia (Western Australia); *First Steps Program (Australia)

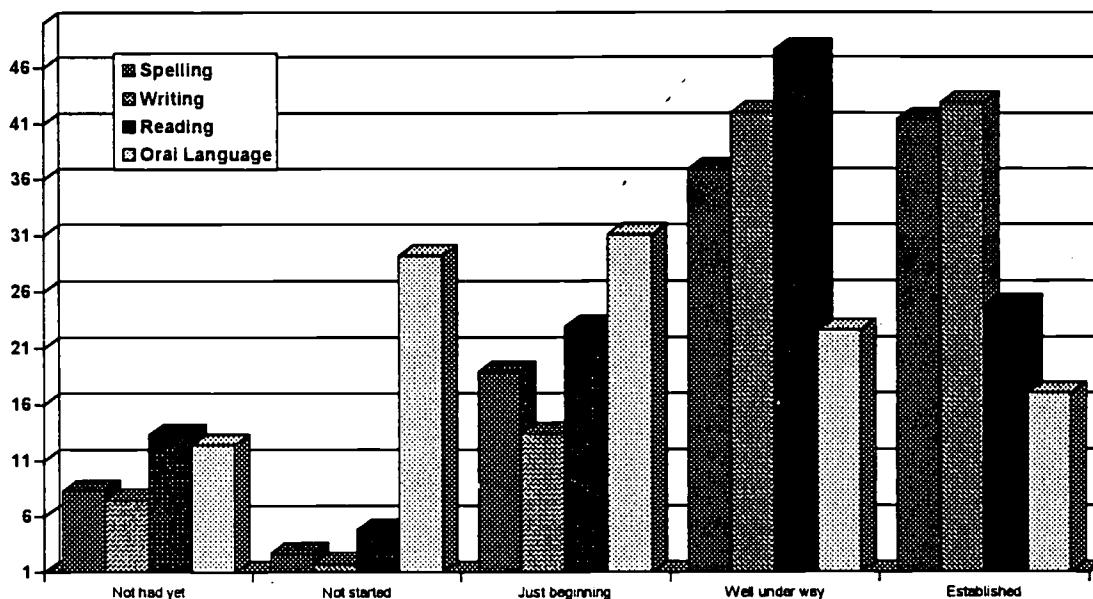
ABSTRACT

A survey of 150 schools in Western Australia asked principals, teachers, and parents about the extent to which the First Steps program literacy component was operating in their schools and their perceptions of the results of the implementation. The First Steps program is designed to support the development of literacy and numeracy among "at-risk" students. Results indicate that: almost all schools were implementing the program in grades K-7; more rural schools valued the professional development program; the most valued aspects of the program were the professional development courses, ELAN teachers (in schools with high proportions of aboriginal students), and Focus Teachers; the program has affected at least a moderate amount of change; teachers felt they were given a wider range of teaching strategies and increased confidence; Focus Teachers had a more positive view of the program's value and the extent of its implementation than teachers in general; most parents saw moderate or major positive changes as a result of the program; and common changes to student attitude include greater enthusiasm about language and reading programs, less dependence on teachers, less frustration, and more confident in taking risks. (MSE)

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A SURVEY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LITERACY COMPONENT OF THE FIRST STEPS PROJECT IN WA.

Figure 1: Degree of Implementation of First Steps Areas



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ISBN 0 7309 6270 9

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Editor's Note

This document is one of a series of reports that document the formative research that supported the creation and development of *First Steps*™. As a result of this research, the Education Department of Western Australia (EDWA), in collaboration with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) revised *First Steps* in response to each of the issues and questions raised by this research. *First Steps* training courses, Developmental Continua, and Resource Books are published with due amendments and alterations.

Other research documents that support the development of *First Steps* include:

Dr. Phil Deschamp:

- ♦ A Survey of the Implementation of the Literacy Component of the *First Steps* Project in WA
- ♦ The Implementation of The Literacy Component of The *First Steps* Project in ELAN Schools
- ♦ A Survey of the Effectiveness of the Focus Teacher 'B' Training for the *First Steps* Project
- ♦ Student Achievement: A Study of the Effects of *First Steps* Teaching on Student Achievement
- ♦ Case Studies of The Implementation of the *First Steps* Project in Twelve Schools
- ♦ The Development and Implementation of the *First Steps* Project in Western Australia

ACER:

- ♦ Empirical Validation of the *First Steps* Reading Continuum
- ♦ Empirical Validation of the *First Steps* Spelling and Writing Continua
- ♦ Empirical Re-Validation of the *First Steps* Spelling Continuum
- ♦ Assessment and Record of the Changes made to the Spelling Continuum
- ♦ The Impact of *First Steps* on Schools and Teachers
- ♦ The Impact of *First Steps* on the Reading and Writing Ability of Year 5 Students
- ♦ Background: *First Steps* and the ACER Evaluation & Report on the Validity of the *First Steps* Writing and Spelling Continua*

EDWA:

- ♦ Supporting Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Through *First Steps*: The Highgate Project

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this survey was to survey 150 schools around the State to ask principals, teachers and parents about the extent to which First Steps was operating in the school, and what they considered had happened as a result.

The four data sets: parents, principals, teachers and Focus Teachers all deliver the same message. They say:

- Each of the four surveys reached a representative sample of respondent from a variety of year levels, locations, school types, school sizes and schools with students with special needs (eg ELAN).
- Almost all schools were implementing First Steps on a K to 7 basis.
- All of the First Steps professional development was regarded as at least *quite valuable* by at least 70 per cent of the teachers, and the Writing professional development viewed as *very valuable* or *extremely valuable* by nearly two thirds of the teachers.
- Schools that had been using First Steps longest gave the professional development highest rating and were further along with implementing its suggestions.
- Country schools and especially remote country schools valued the First Steps professional development more than metropolitan schools and had progressed further with implementation.
- While all aspects of the First Steps model were valued, the most highly rated aspects were the professional development courses, the ELAN teachers and the Focus Teachers.
- More than 80 per cent of teachers rated First Steps as causing at least a moderate amount of change to their:
 - School development planning*
 - Language policies*
 - Language programs*
 - Teaching methods*
 - Monitoring using the continua*
 - Working with students "at risk"*
- Teachers indicated that First Steps had given them a wider range of teaching strategies and increased confidence, however they also raised concerns about the time taken and the amount of work involved.
- Around 85 per cent of the principals considered that the implementation of First Steps practices were *well under way* or *established for Writing*. The figures for Spelling, Reading and Oral Language were around 80, 70 and 50 per cent respectively.
- Focus Teachers typically had a more positive view of the value of First Steps and the extent of implementation than either the principals or teachers.
- On average, Core schools were further developed with their implementation than Cell schools which in turn had progressed further than Associate schools.
- PCAP and ELAN schools claimed to have made more progress with implementing Writing and Reading than other schools in the survey.
- Most of the parents had heard about First Steps and around 80 per cent the parents claimed over the last 12 months to have noticed *moderate positive changes* or *major positive changes* to their:
 - child's interest in Reading*
 - child's ability in Reading*
 - child's ability in Writing.*

- More than two thirds of the teachers thought that First Steps had been at least some assistance with students learning in all of the aspects of language.
- The most noteworthy of the ratings of the impact on student learning were the higher ratings given by ELAN, PCAP and remote schools
- Eighty per cent of the teachers rated student attitude in Writing as *more positive* or *much more positive*. While all of the areas of language were thought to have improved, the Oral Language component was thought to have had least impact, however nearly 60 per cent of teachers rated students as *more positive* or *much more positive* about Oral Language.
- The most common changes to student attitude to learning that teachers consider have resulted from First Steps. were said to have been:
 - Students enthusiastic about language and reading programmes. Improved attitudes.*
 - Spelling programmes relevant to their work and writing - students respond positively.*
 - Students less teacher dependent - more independent.*
 - Children able to work at own levels - less frustration.*
 - Students more willing to 'have-a-go' - take risks.*
- At least 75 per cent of teachers said there had been at least a moderate amount of change in the use students made of all of the strategies, and at **least a quarter of the teachers said there had been a considerable degree of change.**
- The highest levels of change were said to have occurred with regard to the strategies:
 - Text structures*
 - Overall writing strategies*
 - Planning strategies*
 - Spelling strategies*
 - Spelling journal*
- The most common comments from principals about the effects of First Steps on their school were:
 - Whole school, positive approach.*
 - Improved teaching/planning strategies.*
 - Teachers aware of need to reassess traditional teaching methods, more aware of importance of language development.*
 - A unified approach to teaching and recording as a result of the continuum between years.*
 - Confusion, not enough information to implement FIRST STEPS correctly.*
 - Continua too time consuming.*
- The most common comments from teachers were:
 - Staff supportive.*
 - Allows teachers to get clearer understanding of where children are at from continua.*
 - There is added stress and confusion in some teachers as more work involved.*
 - Positive "buzz" as teachers implement all strategies.*
 - More effective environment and more effective learning.*
 - Does nothing for those that ignore change.*
 - Consolidates what some teachers already know.*
 - Many teachers do not know how to use FIRST STEPS continua for further planning.*

- The most common comments from parents were:
 - Positive - a very worthwhile project*
 - Child's self esteem increased*
 - Need more information/workshops, post newsletters directly to parents*
 - Can't tell if changes in my child are due to First Steps or growing older*
 - The resources are the key. The real resources are the teachers and parents who support it*
 - Children can develop at their own rate*
 - Don't know much about First Steps*
- The most common comments from Focus Teachers were:
 - Very positive response. Excellent, fantastic, etc.*
 - Positive attitude towards philosophy, ideas and strategies.*
 - Continuum helpful in evaluation.*
 - Funding must be maintained to ensure continuation of FIRST STEPS as a resource for teachers.*

The survey clearly reinforced the findings from earlier ACER surveys that schools were making progress with implementing First Steps strategies and that teachers, parents and principals saw its suggestions as contributing significantly to students acquiring skills in Literacy.

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Preface

The First Steps project

The First Steps project emerged in 1988 in response to a growing perception in schools and the Central Office of the Education Department that many children who were experiencing difficulties in learning Literacy were not having their needs adequately met. Increasing awareness of the difficulties experienced by these children, coupled with their increasing numbers in their local schools due to increasing acceptance of the policy of *mainstreaming* children with learning difficulties had caused a ground swell demand for professional development for teachers on better ways of assisting these children.

Earlier responses to this perceived area of need had included major professional development initiatives on the wholistic nature of learning and language such as the Early Literacy Inservice Course (ELIC) which had achieved improvements but it was widely believed that its implementation had been too dependent upon individual teacher initiatives which often had not received sufficient overt support and encouragement at the whole school level. Experience from involvement with ELIC suggested that the problem should be addressed more comprehensively as a whole school issues back at the educational bedrock of teaching principles and teaching methods.

In direct response to requests from schools Education Department officers devised a proposal for a radical refocus on the teaching of language and put this proposal to Government for support and the extra funding needed to enable the implementation process to be designed to ensure that the proposed approach was embedded in a whole school approach to the teaching of language. To capture the notion that this was a *back to basics* proposal it was titled *First Steps*. The proposal had as its goal:

To ensure that all K-5 children, especially those at risk, make measurable progress in the areas of mathematics and early literacy learning, and are able to sustain that progress in their later primary years.

The project that evolved spread rapidly across schools in Western Australia. In 1994 three research projects were commissioned to document the origins of the project and the extent to which schools had adopted its materials and recommended procedures.

- The first project was to develop a history of First Steps from 1988 to 1994.
- The second was to survey 150 schools around the State to ask principals, teachers and parents about the extent to which First Steps was operating in the school, and what they considered had happened as a result.
- The third project consisted of case studies of twelve schools situated in widely differing parts of the State, and having experienced differing modes of support in the adoption of First Steps methods.

This is the report of the second of these projects - the survey of 150 schools.

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY

The First Steps project had been the focus of a number of separate but related evaluation projects since it began in Western Australia in 1988. The results of some of these evaluations have been described in the history report mentioned in the Preface.

The purpose of the present report was to describe the extent to which parents, teachers and principals considered that First Steps methods had been implemented in their schools, and to report their views on its effects on students' attitudes to learning and their learning outcomes.

2.0 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questionnaires sought information regarding:

PART A - SCHOOL AND TEACHER DETAILS

- 1. Location of the school.**
- 2. Size of the school.**
- 3. Type of school.**
- 4. Length of teaching experience**
- 5. Length of time at the school**
- 6. The year in which the school began with First Steps.**
- 7. Special features (PSP, ELAN, PCAP, or Remote Area)**
- 8. The Year levels presently taught**
- 9. The parts of the school which are working with First Steps**

PART B - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 10. Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes**
- 11. Reasons for the ratings of the professional development programmes**
- 12. Ratings of the components of the First Steps model in terms of their impact on the implementation of First Steps in the school.**

PART C - EFFECTS ON TEACHING

- 13. The impact has First Steps had on teaching?**
- 14. Changes that have occurred to teaching:**
- 15. Ratings of the extent to which the components of the First Steps literacy programme have been implemented**

PART D - EFFECTS ON STUDENT LEARNING AND ATTITUDES

- 16. Ratings of the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning**
- 17. Changes to students' attitudes to learning that have occurred as a result of First Steps**
- 18. The impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student attitude to and confidence in language**
- 19. Examples where First Steps has helped individual students**
- 20. The impact of First Steps on students' use of language strategies**
- 21. The effect of First Steps on the school as a whole**
- 22. How people feel about First Steps**

3.0 METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

Powered by extensive discussions within the Steering Committee, the project passed through the following traditional steps:

- The purposes of the survey were discussed and the research questions clarified. Then separate but similar questionnaires were drafted for principals, teachers, Focus Teachers (these are selected teachers who have been trained to assist other teachers to implement the First Steps approach with their children) and parents to address research questions.
- The list of schools to be contacted were decided in discussion with the Steering Committee. The sample was chosen so as to obtain:
 - schools spread across the State,
 - schools of various sizes, and
 - schools which experienced different modes of introduction to the First Steps project.
- The draft instruments were refined with the assistance of the Steering Committee until they believe that the instruments ask the desired questions in a manner which were understood by the people completing them.
- The data tables into which the information were collated were drafted and the Steering Committee were invited to check that if those tables contained data, that they would answer the questions that the project seeks to address.
- A set of covering letters were prepared to describe the project and encourage people to see the purposes in replying.
- The questionnaires and letters were printed and dispatched with return envelopes. (Sample instruments and letters are contained in the appendix.)
- A reminder note was sent to schools thanking those who had replied and urging those who had not to send in their returns.

- The resulting data were analysed and then described in this report which is written with the audience of Decision-makers in mind. The draft were given to the Steering Committee for comment before finalisation. Copyright of the report is owned by the Education Department.

4.0 RESULTS

The questionnaires were sent to 150 schools. Each school package sought replies from the principal, the Focus Teacher, five parents and five teachers. Replies were received from a total of 121 principals, 93 Focus Teachers, 353 teachers and 549 parents. This was a response rate of 81 per cent for principals, 62 per cent for Focus Teachers (not all of the schools had Focus Teachers) 47 per cent for teachers and 73 per cent for parents.

The data from the analysis of the replies from each group are shown in the tables in Appendix 1 to 4. In the interests of easy of reading, the collections of data tables have been left in the Appendix. The commentary that follows in this section includes only the most relevant of the data tables and refers readers to the Appendix.

Particularly important sections of the data have been highlighted with graphs.

When reading this commentary it is important to keep in mind that these are the opinions of the respondents such that differences of opinions across and even within schools are possible and reasonable.

PART A - SCHOOL AND TEACHER DETAILS

1. Locations, Types and Sizes of the schools that replied to the survey

Tables Pr1 (corresponding to Table 1 for Principals in Appendix 1), Pa1 (corresponding to Table 1 for Parents in Appendix 2 and also displayed below), Te1 (corresponding to Table 1 for Teachers in Appendix 3) and FT1 (corresponding to Table 1 for Focus Teachers in Appendix 4) show that the survey received replies from a range of metropolitan, country and remote country schools, and that these schools included a range of types of school which approximate the distribution of schools in Western Australia.

Table Pa1 **Type of school**

Type of School	Metro	Country	Remote	Total
Primary	309	159	22	490
District High	2	38	6	46
Other	3	2	8	13
Total	314	199	36	549

Tables Pr2 (shown below), Pa2, Te2 and FT2 show a similarly appropriate range of schools of various size.

Table Pr2 **Size of school**

Size of School	Metro	Country	Remote	Total
100 or less students	2	12	4	18
101 - 300 students	27	8	1	36
301 - 700 students	31	20		51
701 or more students	6	10		16

As the schools were chosen on the basis of a stratified random sample, this distribution of replies suggest that the data can reasonable be used as an indication of the opinions of staff and parents in Western Australian schools. In any event, the general similarity in the replies when broken down by location, type and size shown later in the report render this not a contentious issue.

2. Length of teaching experience and time at the school

Tables Te3b (shown below) and FT3b show that the replies were received from teachers with a wide range of teaching experience. The absence of teachers in their first year in the metropolitan area was possible a result of the principals allocating the questionnaires to teachers who were in a position to make comparative comments about First Steps. These low numbers dictate that the later breakdowns of results by teachers in their first year should be viewed with caution.

Table Te3b Teaching experience

Teaching Experience	Metro	Country	Remote
my first year		6	1
1 to 3 years	3	24	7
4 to 6 years	24	38	2
7 to 10 years	37	20	3
more than 10 years	142	53	3

Tables Te3a and TF3a (shown below) display the length of time the teachers and Focus Teachers had been at that school. They show that the majority had less than 7 years experience. In view of the small numbers of remote schools, breakdowns of their results should be viewed with caution, and breakdowns of their results for Focus Teachers should be seen as the views of individuals.

Table FT3a Length of time at that school

Time at this school	Metro	Country	Remote
my first year	3	9	
1 to 3 years	12	17	1
4 to 6 years	17	8	1
7 to 10 years	9	5	
more than 10 years	8	2	1

3. Special features (PSP, ELAN, PCAP, or Remote Area Schools)

Tables Pr4a and Pr4b (both shown below) display the whether the schools that replied were Core Schools (ie were fully funded to participate in First Step), were Cell Schools (ie were partially funded), or were Associate Schools (ie paid for their own participation).

The questionnaire also asked people to show whether the school was associated with the ELAN Project (ie schools with a high proportion of students who need assistance with learning English), or were in a low SES area and were part of the Priority Schools Project (PSP), or Priority Country Area Project (PCAP).

The results to these items are shown broken down by location and type of school.

Table Pr4a Type of involvement with First Steps (by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote	Total
Core school	21	18	1	40
Cell school	14	8	1	23
Associate school	31	20	3	54
PSP school	18	12	1	31
ELAN school	9	6	1	16
PCAP school		16	4	20
Remote Country school			4	4

Table Pr4b Type of involvement with First Steps (by type of school)

	Primary	District High	Remote
Core school	34	4	2
Cell school	22		1
Associate school	48	4	2
PSP school	29		2
ELAN school	14	1	1
PCAP school	15	4	1
Remote Country school			4

Again it should be remembered that the breakdowns of results of remote school by special features shown later should be treated with caution.

4. The Year levels presently taught

Tables Te4c and d (shown below) and FT4c and d show the Year levels that the teachers who responded to the survey are presently teaching. They show that a reasonable spread of responses was received from all levels from K to seven.

Table Te4c Level of teaching (by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote
K	14	14	3
Year 1	36	37	7
Year 2	41	42	7
Year 3	44	34	7
Year 4	42	36	5
Year 5	43	33	5
Year 6	38	35	5
Year 7	32	31	5
Other		9	3

Table Te4d Level of teaching (by type of school)

	Primary	District High	Other
K	26	3	2
Year 1	70	8	2
Year 2	78	10	3
Year 3	73	11	1
Year 4	71	11	1
Year 5	73	7	1
Year 6	68	9	1
Year 7	59	8	1
Other	8	2	2

5. Year levels Implementing First Steps broken down by Year of Commencement

Table Pr5 shows that irrespective of the year in which the school began learning about First Steps, almost all of the schools in the survey stated that they were implementing First Steps on a K to Year Seven basis. Most of the schools which gave a K to Year Three reply were Junior Primary schools.

Table Pr5 Levels of implementation of First Steps (by year of commencement)

Implementation	Year commenced on First Steps			Total
	1989-1990	1991-1992	1993-1994	
K only				
K to 3 only	3	1	2	6
K to 7	37	42	23	102
Year 4 and 5 only				
Year 6 and 7 only				
Other	4	4	4	12

PART B - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

6. Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes

Table Te6a-e (shown below) and Tables Pr6a-e and Ft6a-e (in the appendix) show responses regarding the perceived value of the First Steps professional development programmes.

Table 6a in each series shows frequencies (in percentages) of people who chose each possible reply, and the average of their answers. In the table below, a total of around 90 per cent of the teachers rated the First Steps professional development for **Spelling** as at least **quite valuable**, while more than half thought it was **very valuable** or **outstanding**.

The professional development for Writing received the highest rating with a mean score of 3.7 on the one to five scale, and almost 65 per cent rating it as **very valuable** or **outstanding**. The **Linking Day** received the lowest rating, nevertheless on average teachers considered it to have been **quite valuable**.

Less than one percent of the teachers thought that the professional development for Spelling, Writing, Reading or Oral Language was of **no value**, however six per cent of teachers gave the Linking Day this low rating, and a total of around 30 per cent questioned its value.

Table Te6a Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes

	of no value	not very valuable	quite valuable	very valuable	outstandingly valuable	Mean
Spelling	.3	10.4	39.1	41.8	8.5	3.5
Writing	.3	5.3	29.9	50.6	13.9	3.7
Reading	.6	8.4	38.3	43.5	9.1	3.5
Oral Language	.7	10.3	46.4	35.7	6.9	3.4
Linking Day	6.2	24.8	40.3	20.2	8.5	3.0

Table 6b shows teachers' ratings of the First Steps professional development broken down by the year levels they teach. While acknowledging that the mean scores are too similar, and the trend too erratic, for any weight to be placed on their differences, it is hard to escape the impression that the teachers of the lower year levels gave higher ratings of the value of Spelling, Reading, Oral Language and the Linking Day, while Writing was valued to a similarly high extent by teachers at all levels.

Table Te6b Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes (mean scores by Year level)

	K	3	5	7
Spelling	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.4
Writing	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9
Reading	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.5
Oral Language	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.3
Linking Day	3.1	3.3	3.2	2.8

Applying a similar level of analysis to Table 6c leave the impression that teachers in country schools gave higher ratings to the professional development than those in metropolitan schools, and teachers in remote schools gave higher rating again.

Table Te6c Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes (mean scores by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote	Primary	D High	Other
Spelling	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.5	3.6	3.5
Writing	3.6	3.8	4.1	3.7	3.9	3.7
Reading	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.3
Oral Language	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.3
Linking Day	2.9	3.1	3.8	2.9	3.6	2.0

The results for the Focus Teachers (see FT6a-c in the appendix) followed similar patterns and encourage similar interpretations.

Notwithstanding a popular view that the First Steps professional development programmes were improved over the years, **the schools which had been using First Steps longest gave the professional development highest ratings** (see Table Te6d below). This result permits any number of speculative interpretations. Perhaps over time they had developed deeper appreciation of the value of the courses, or possibly time diminished their memories of how much work it had been. The data cannot inform us as to why we have this result.

Table Te6d Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes (mean scores by year of commencement)

	1989-1990	1991-1992	1993-1994
Spelling	3.6	3.4	3.4
Writing	3.9	3.7	3.5
Reading	3.7	3.5	3.4
Oral Language	3.5	3.4	3.3
Linking Day	3.2	2.8	3.0

The results for the Focus Teachers (see FT6d below) show little variation across the years of commencing with First Steps.

Table FT6d Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes (mean scores by year of commencement)

	1989-1990	1991-1992	1993-1994
Spelling	4.0	4.1	4.2
Writing	4.2	4.2	4.1
Reading	4.1	4.0	4.0
Oral Language	3.9	3.8	3.9
Linking Day	3.5	3.4	3.8

7. Reasons for the ratings of the professional development programmes

Table Te6e shows teachers' reasons for giving their ratings to the First Steps professional development programmes. The most frequent reason was the honest admission that they valued the professional development because:

If we had just being given the literature it may not be read and therefore used.

There were reasons for the positive comments:

Practical information on use of activities most valuable. Easy to implement,

Spelling programme activities most beneficial.

The programmes motivated and clarified the use of First Steps.

and reasons for more cautious reactions:

Some repetition.

It depended upon the credibility of the presenters.

Table Te6e Why teachers gave these ratings to the First Steps professional development programmes

	Comment	No.
1	If we had just being given the literature it may not be read and therefore used.	67
2	Writing has become a priority.	38
3	Practical information on use of activities most valuable. Easy to implement.	31
4	Spelling programme activities most beneficial.	16
5	The programmes motivated and clarified the use of FIRST STEPS.	14
6	Some repetition.	14
7	It depended upon the credibility of the presenters.	9
8	Reading - great strategies.	9
9	Inadequate time given to absorb and implement the whole process.	8
10	Despite problems/workload FIRST STEPS useful and meaningful.	7
11	Well organised and presented.	4
12	Consolidates and revises what has already been learnt.	3
13	Writing/reading helps identify children "at risk".	5
14	Continuum presents new approach to planning and recording.	2
15	Reading continuum needs refinement.	2
16	Writing well structured with practical classroom orientation.	1
17	Oral language component good.	1

The results for the Focus Teachers (see Table FT6e) were very similar.

8. Ratings of the components of the First Steps model in terms of their impact on the implementation of First Steps in the school.

Table Te6f (shown below) and Pr6f and FT6f (in the appendix) show ratings of the impact of aspects of the First Steps model on its implementation.

It should be noted that the column showing the percentage of respondents who say they have not experienced a particular aspect of the model is independent of the other row percentages. For example, 65.7 per cent of the teachers said they had not had a collaborative teacher. Of those who had, around 45 per cent rated them as *very valuable* or *outstandingly valuable*, and more than 80 per cent thought they were at least *quite valuable*.

The mean scores show that the highest ratings were given to the ELAN teachers (by the small percentage that had them) and to the First Steps professional development programmes. Almost as high ratings were given to the Focus A Teachers as a source of advice.

Given the results whereby around two thirds of the teachers rated all aspects of the model as at least *quite valuable*, it is noteworthy that 20 per cent or more of the teachers *who had experienced that aspect of the model* rated the collaborative teacher or Focus Teacher providing classroom support or model lessons as *not very valuable* or *of little value*.

Table Te6f Ratings of aspects of the First Steps model in terms of their impact on the implementation of First Steps (percentages and means)

	not had	of no value	not very valuable	quite valuable	very valuable	outstandingly valuable	Mean
Collaborative teachers	65.9	7.3	12.9	36.3	32.3	11.3	3.3
Focus A Teachers - to arrange In-class support	29.7	11.7	13.7	35.2	30.5	9.0	3.1
Focus A Teachers - to provide Model lessons	42.9	14.4	18.3	32.7	25.0	9.6	3.0
Focus A Teachers - as a source of advice	15.7	4.2	9.4	36.2	35.2	15.0	3.5
The First Steps School Development Officers	26.3	6.0	16.4	39.9	31.3	6.3	3.2
ELAN teacher	85.7		11.5	30.8	40.4	17.3	3.6
Professional Development courses	12.6	.9	7.5	35.2	44.0	12.3	3.6

The opinions of the Focus Teachers and principals shown in Tables FT6f and Pr6 follow similar patterns.

PART C - EFFECTS ON TEACHING

9 The impact of First Steps on teaching

Table Te7a (shown below) and TF7a (in the appendix) show the results to one of the most important questions in the survey, has First Steps affected teaching?

Table Te7a shows that more than 80 per cent of teachers rated it as causing at least a moderate amount of change to their:

School development planning
Language policies
Language programs
Teaching methods
Monitoring using the continua
Working with students "at risk"

This surely is a powerful finding for the First Steps programme.

Nearly a quarter of the teachers indicated that an area of major change in their teaching had been monitoring using the continua, and around half of the teachers in the survey reported that First Steps had caused them to make at least a **considerable degree of change** to:

School development planning
Language policies
Language programs
Teaching methods

Lowest rating in this item was given to the change in reporting to parents. Less than 30 per cent reported that First Steps had caused them to make at least a **considerable degree of change** to:

Reporting to parents

however a further quarter reported making a moderate amount of change in this area.

Table Te7a The impact First Steps has had on teaching

	No change	Very little change	Moderate amount of change	A considerable degree of change	Major change	Mean
School development planning	3.7	13.8	32.2	38.2	12.1	3.4
Language policies	4.5	14.2	33.4	37.1	10.8	3.4
Language programs	2.2	11.8	33.1	39.0	13.8	3.5
Teaching methods	2.0	13.0	39.0	35.3	10.7	3.4
Monitoring using the continua	4.0	11.7	26.5	33.9	23.9	3.6
Reporting to parents	11.7	28.7	31.8	21.8	6.0	2.8
Working with students "at risk"	4.0	16.2	43.1	28.3	8.4	3.2

A surprising result in Table Te7a (above) is the comparatively low rating given to:

Working with students "at risk"

As this has been a major focus of First Steps from its commencement it seems surprising that more than 40 per cent of teachers considered it had made only a **moderate amount of change** and a further 20 per cent thought it had made **very little or no change** in this area.

The equivalent information from Focus Teachers (shown below) follows the same pattern but with slightly more positive opinions.

Table FT7a The impact First Steps has had on teaching

	No change	Very little change	Moderate amount of change	A considerable degree of change	Major change	Mean
School development planning	1.1	6.6	36.3	44.0	12.1	3.6
Language policies	1.1	9.9	26.4	49.5	13.2	3.6
Language programs		8.7	28.3	45.7	17.4	3.7
Teaching methods	1.1	5.5	39.6	37.4	16.5	3.6
Monitoring using the continua	2.2	3.3	18.7	44.0	31.9	4.0
Reporting to parents	5.6	17.8	31.1	34.4	11.1	3.3
Working with students "at risk"	1.1	12.1	35.2	38.5	13.2	3.5

Breaking down the results on this item by location, type of school and special focus displayed a similar pattern to that described above regarding the aspects of the model. Country schools gave slightly higher mean ratings to most areas, and remote country schools gave slightly higher ratings again.

Table Te7b The impact First Steps has had on teaching (mean scores by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote	Primary	District High	Other
School development planning	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.4	4.0
Language policies	3.2	3.5	3.8	3.3	3.4	4.0
Language programs	3.4	3.6	4.0	3.5	3.5	3.8
Teaching methods	3.2	3.6	3.9	3.4	3.5	3.8
Monitoring using the continua	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.6	4.3
Reporting to parents	2.7	2.8	3.7	2.8	3.1	2.8
Working with students "at risk"	3.2	3.2	3.6	3.2	3.2	3.3

While not wanting to make much of the difference in mean scores, the fact that in Table Te7c (shown below) PSP schools rated

Working with students "at risk"

in about the same comparative position as the result for all schools (3.2) supports the puzzling finding that First Steps was seen to result in higher levels of improvement in school development planning, language policies, language programs and teaching methods, than assisting children at risk.

Table Te7c The impact First Steps has had on teaching (mean scores by special characteristics)

	PSP	ELAN	PCAP
School development planning	3.5	3.7	3.6
Language policies	3.5	3.6	3.9
Language programs	3.7	3.8	4.0
Teaching methods	3.5	3.8	3.9
Monitoring using the continua	3.8	4.0	4.1
Reporting to parents	3.0	3.2	3.2
Working with students "at risk"	3.3	3.5	3.6

Again, the results for the Focus Teachers (shown below) were similar but more positive on almost all areas.

The extremely positive results from teachers in the ELAN program should be noted.

Table FT7c The impact First Steps has had on teaching (mean scores by special characteristics)

	PSP	ELAN	PCAP
School development planning	3.7	3.9	3.7
Language policies	3.7	4.0	3.6
Language programs	3.9	4.4	3.6
Teaching methods	3.9	4.2	3.8
Monitoring using the continua	4.2	4.4	3.9
Reporting to parents	3.2	3.8	3.4
Working with students "at risk"	3.7	4.0	3.7

The aim of this survey was to survey 150 schools around the State to ask principals, teachers and parents about the extent to which First Steps was operating in the school, and what they considered had happened as a result.

The four data sets: parents, principals, teachers and Focus Teachers all deliver the same message. They say:

- Each of the four surveys reached a representative sample of respondent from a variety of year levels, locations, school types, school sizes and schools with students with special needs (eg ELAN).
- Almost all schools were implementing First Steps on a K to 7 basis.
- All of the First Steps professional development was regarded as at least *quite valuable* by at least 70 per cent of the teachers, and the Writing professional development viewed as *very valuable* or *extremely valuable* by nearly two thirds of the teachers.
- Schools that had been using First Steps longest gave the professional development highest rating and were further along with implementing its suggestions.
- Country schools and especially remote country schools valued the First Steps professional development more than metropolitan schools and had progressed further with implementation.
- While all aspects of the First Steps model were valued, the most highly rated aspects were the professional development courses, the ELAN teachers and the Focus Teachers.
- More than 80 per cent of teachers rated First Steps as causing at least a moderate amount of change to their:
 - School development planning*
 - Language policies*
 - Language programs*
 - Teaching methods*
 - Monitoring using the continua*
 - Working with students "at risk"*
- Teachers indicated that First Steps had given them a wider range of teaching strategies and increased confidence, however they also raised concerns about the time taken and the amount of work involved.
- Around 85 per cent of the principals considered that the implementation of First Steps practices were *well under way* or *established for Writing*. The figures for Spelling, Reading and Oral Language were around 80, 70 and 50 per cent respectively.
- Focus Teachers typically had a more positive view of the value of First Steps and the extent of implementation than either the principals or teachers.
- On average, Core schools were further developed with their implementation than Cell schools which in turn had progressed further than Associate schools.
- PCAP and ELAN schools claimed to have made more progress with implementing Writing and Reading than other schools in the survey.
- Most of the parents had heard about First Steps and around 80 per cent the parents claimed over the last 12 months to have noticed *moderate positive changes* or *major positive changes* to their:
 - child's interest in Reading*
 - child's ability in Reading*
 - child's ability in Writing.*

The most common changes reported in the teaching of Writing were:

Introduction of different forms of writing, i.e. report writing, narrative, exposition etc. helps them focus on writing.

More structure/modelling in the teaching of writing.

Frameworks worthwhile/useful.

Emphasis shifted to informational texts.

Editing and proof reading skills taught.

b) With regard to the teaching of Writing

	Comment	No.
1	Introduction of different forms of writing, i.e. report writing, narrative, exposition etc. helps them focus On writing.	74
2	More structure/modelling in the teaching of writing.	50
3	Frameworks worthwhile/useful.	32
4	Emphasis shifted to informational texts.	15
5	Editing and proof reading skills taught.	13
6	Implement daily writing.	11
7	Can refer to particular stages, DC and appropriate strategies to move children from phase to phase.	11
8	Focussing on thematic/integrated approaches.	11
9	Good teachers have been using these strategies for years.	11
10	Integration throughout the curriculum.	10
11	Content better organised, has greater definition and more sequential in its development.	10
12	More conferencing with students/problem solving.	9
13	Use of continua.	9
14	More variety in activities.	8
15	Student outcomes superior as a result of better organisation.	7
16	More encouragement to 'have-a-go' - take risks.	7
17	Only just implementing - still unsettled but hope to improve in the future.	7
18	Focus on grammar aspects of writing.	5
19	Now there is more continuity between teachers and year levels.	5
20	More emphasis on the various areas rather than concentrated effort in merely one or two.	4
21	No change	0

Although the item really asked about their own teaching some teachers wrote that as a result of First Steps:

Now there is more continuity between teachers and year levels.

and

More conferencing with students/problem solving.

The most common changes reported in the teaching of Reading were:

Using a wide range of First Steps ideas and strategies.

Use of big books/shared books.

Whole language approach across curriculum.

Use DC (ie the Developmental Continuum) to identify phases of children, especially "at risk".

Like strategies such as using "before, during and after" method.

c) With regard to the teaching of Reading

	Comment	No.
1	Using a wide range of First Steps ideas and strategies	35
2	Use of big books/shared books.	31
3	Whole language approach across curriculum.	29
4	Was already doing some of the strategies.	28
5	Use DC to identify phases of children, especially "at risk".	25
6	Like strategies such as using <i>before, during and after</i> method.	21
7	Reading for meaning strategies, text innovations.	19
8	Less basals are now used.	11
9	Listed ideas are great to focus planning on.	9
10	More exposure to different forms to read and enjoy.	7
11	Assessments have become more specific to skills in the continua.	7
12	Less emphasis on formal comprehension type activities.	7
13	More confidence to let children run with their own personal development.	6
14	Integrated language, literature, social studies programme.	6
15	Reassurance on the right track - more confidence.	6
16	Has tended to be more thematic.	5
17	Extension catered for.	5
18	Not keen on the continua.	5
19	Remediation is automatic.	4
20	Confusion between known methods and First Steps organisation.	4
21	Do not think it caters for children with specific learning difficulties.	3
22	No change	0

Some teacher noted that First Steps had increased their confidence:

More confidence to let children run with their own personal development.

Reassurance on the right track - more confidence.

Others showed that they were not big fans of the First Steps approach:

Not keen on the continua.

Confusion between known methods and FIRST STEPS organisation.

Do not think it caters for children with specific learning difficulties.

The most common changes reported in the teaching of Oral Language were:

More importance attached to oral language.

More organised news sessions - 'who, what, when, where, why'.

New ideas - greater variety.

Integrated discussion etc. using manager/ recorder/ encourager/ reporter.

Barrier games very effective.

d) With regard to the teaching of Oral Language

	Comment	No.
1	More importance attached to oral language.	56
2	More organised news sessions - 'who, what, when, where, why'.	29
3	New ideas - greater variety.	28
4	Integrated discussion etc. using manager/ recorder/ encourager/ reporter.	21
5	Barrier games very effective.	19
6	Only small amount but making progress. More time needed to implement.	19
7	Very little change.	17
8	Value of role play.	16
9	Linking oral language to written.	16
10	Teaching oral language has become more formalised - planned activities.	14
11	More small group activities.	13
12	Most changes here as several PD days attended.	13
13	Gives areas of oral language to concentrate on - social convention, literacy/language etc.	12
14	Use continua to identify where children are at and how to move them on.	12
15	Only use in evaluation.	11
16	Changes in monitoring.	8
17	Have used programme for several years.	6
18	Found spot checks and rating scales extremely useful in giving direction to children.	5
19	Not too time consuming to carry out - excellent.	5
20	No change	0

The most common changes reported in the teaching learning difficulties were:

Using information in continua enables us to plan lessons directed at individual children's needs.

Using specific strategies to help children 'at risk'.

Has helped in pin-pointing children's problem areas.

Have added FIRST STEPS ideas into programme.

Whole class activities that focus on 'at risk' children provide consolidation and revision for others.

e) In terms of supporting students at risk, or those with learning difficulties.

	Comment	No.
1	Using information in continua enables us to plan lessons directed at individual children's needs.	67
2	Using specific strategies to help children 'at risk'.	58
3	Has helped in pin-pointing children's problem areas.	45
4	Have added FIRST STEPS ideas into programme.	31
5	Whole class activities that focus on 'at risk' children provide consolidation and revision for others.	28
6	Performance indicators a positive reinforcement to assist teachers and their teaching.	17
7	Close monitoring of small amounts of progress.	12
8	Easy find strategies for heterogenous groups.	10
9	Spelling as guideline for activities.	8
10	Was already using these strategies.	4
11	Provided frameworks.	4
12	Less threatening for the children.	4
13	More coordinated effort throughout school.	3
14	Great for extension.	3
15	Does not cater enough for students at risk/SLD.	3
16	Helps more able students.	2
17	Generally teachers not using the reading difficulties model.	2
18	Can use information to help parents help children.	1
19	Continue to use 'tried and true' methods.	1
20	School resources can only be spread so far. It takes a lot of time.	1
21	Concerned that junior teachers place too much emphasis on developmental aspects and fail to identify hidden reasons for non-achievement.	1
22	No change	0

A few negative comments were written:

Does not cater enough for students at risk/SLD.

Helps more able students.

Generally teachers not using the reading difficulties model.

Continue to use 'tried and true' methods.

School resources can only be spread so far. It takes a lot of time.

Concerned that junior teachers place too much emphasis on developmental aspects and fail to identify hidden reasons for non-achievement.

The most common changes reported in how First Steps has affected classroom organisation were:

Whole language environment/programming.

Added to the variety of strategies.

Little change as already doing most.

More individualised/flexible way of learning, teaching and accepting children.

More relaxed atmosphere.

Independent learning occurs more frequently.

f) In terms of how it has affected classroom organisation.

	Comment	No.
1	Whole language environment/programming.	39
2	Added to the variety of strategies.	27
3	Little change as already doing most.	21
4	More individualised/flexible way of learning, teaching and accepting children.	16
5	More relaxed atmosphere.	15
6	Independent learning occurs more frequently.	15
7	Have increased reading/writing centres to allow for learning variation between class.	13
8	More activity by children.	11
9	Classroom teaching more organised.	12
10	In some areas solid links throughout the curriculum areas.	12
11	Can be more specific about what strategies/outcomes I want to use/achieve.	10
12	Most subjects not affected.	9
13	Better utilisation of support.	8
14	Daily writing programme.	8
15	Spelling where journal work and activities have replaced My Word Book.	7
16	Some strategies/activities have been quite time consuming to implement.	7
17	We are able to 'run' with items of high interest.	5
18	Have had to learn to slow down and not try to do too much - gives children time to acquire skills.	5
19	Dramatic change.	5
20	Has made it easier.	4
21	Disorganised.	4
22	No change	0

A full spectrum of replies was received from:

Most subjects not affected.

Disorganised.

to:

Dramatic change.

Has made it easier.

The most common changes reported to assessment were:

Using developmental continua in assessment.

Has enabled me to be more accurate, more defined.

Using information to plan future teaching for the classroom.

Combining a variety of sources (continua, anecdotal and more traditional to get broader view).

Achievement is individualised.

Assessment on-going.

g) In terms of assessment.		
	Comment	No.
1	Using developmental continua in assessment.	56
2	Has enabled me to be more accurate, more defined.	40
3	Using information to plan future teaching for the classroom.	36
4	Combining a variety of sources (continua, anecdotal and more traditional to get broader view).	27
5	Achievement is individualised.	21
6	Assessment on-going.	20
7	Assessment using continua makes reporting to parents easier.	18
8	Feel assessment sheets suitable for small minority of children only.	16
9	Confusion as one tends to use both old methods and FIRST STEPS resulting in extra workload.	15
10	Use of writing continua established.	14
11	More work samples used.	12
12	Need to review and reorganise assessment.	10
13	Only Children 'at risk' assessed on the continua.	10
14	Uniform assessment through whole school.	10
15	Assessment takes longer.	9
16	Too much work to do all the class.	9
17	Has assisted and given parents self help strategies to continue work at home (parents' pack).	8
18	Observational assessment.	8
19	Some assessment forms used.	8
20	Encourage teachers to use each other's continua.	8
21	No change	0

A few teachers raised the issue of time:

Assessment takes longer.

Too much work to do all the class.

The responses from the Focus Teachers were coded into the same categories and follow a similar pattern (see Table FT8a-h) and those from principals are in Table Pr12a-h in the appendix.

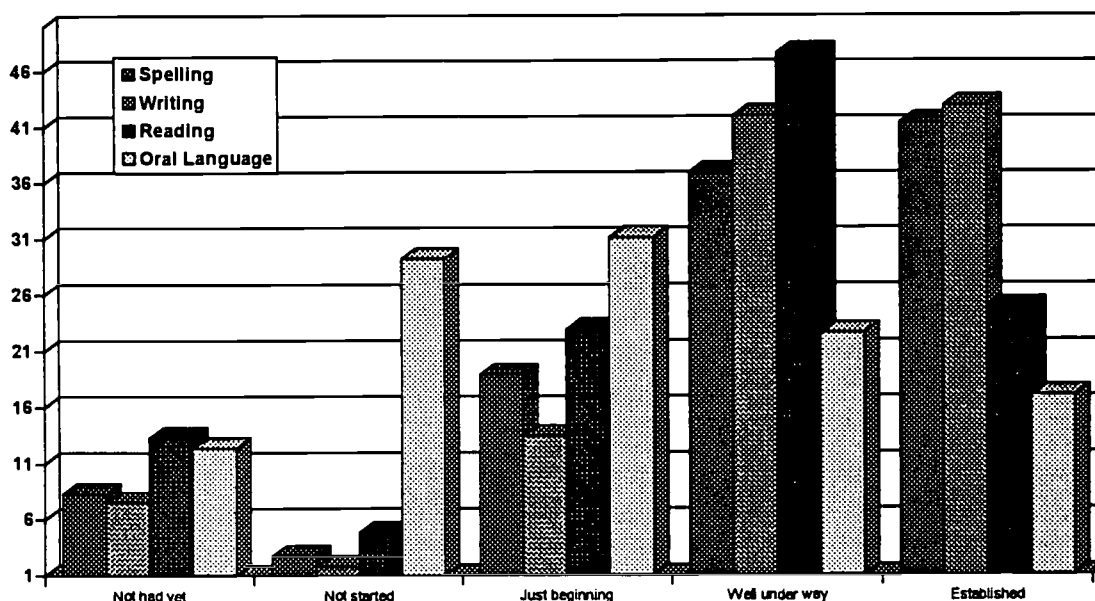
11 Ratings of the extent to which the components of the First Steps literacy programme have been implemented

Another key question in the survey related to the extent to which First Steps had been implemented. Table Pr13a-e (below) and Figure 1 show that around **80 per cent** of the principals considered that the implementation of First Steps practices were **well under way** or **established** for Spelling. The figures for Writing, Reading and Oral Language were around 85, 70 and 50 per cent respectively.

Table Pr13a Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented

	Not had yet	Not started	Just beginning	Well under way	Established	Mean
Spelling	8.3	2.7	18.9	36.9	41.4	3.2
Writing	7.5	1.8	13.4	42.0	42.9	3.3
Reading	13.3	4.8	22.9	47.6	24.8	2.9
Oral Language	12.4	29.2	31.1	22.6	17.0	2.3

Figure 1: Degree of Implementation of First Steps Areas



The results from teachers (Table Te9a in the appendix) were similar to the principals, however the Focus Teachers (shown below) were even more positive. Around **95 per cent** believed that the implementation of First Steps Writing was well under way or was established in their schools..

Table FT9a Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented

	Not had yet	Not started	Just beginning	Well under way	Established	Mean
Spelling	4.4		15.7	22.5	61.8	3.5
Writing	2.2	3.3	2.2	26.4	68.1	3.6
Reading	6.5	4.6	19.5	34.5	41.4	3.1
Oral Language	9.7	17.9	26.2	23.8	32.1	2.7

The breakdown of degree of implementation by location, school type, and special features showed the same pattern as previous items. Country and remote country schools (and therefore District High schools) claimed higher levels of implementation (see Table Pr13b and 13c below).

Table Pr13b Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote
Spelling	2.8	3.4	3.5
Writing	3.0	3.4	3.5
Reading	2.3	3.1	3.3
Oral Language	2.0	2.2	2.8

Table Pr13c Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by type of school)

	Primary	D High	Other
Spelling	3.1	3.4	2.6
Writing	3.1	3.8	3.2
Reading	2.6	3.3	2.8
Oral Language	2.0	3.3	3.0

No clear relationship between school size or the length of time the principal had been at the school, and the extent of implementation was apparent (see Tables Pr13d-e below).

Table Pr13d Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by size of school)

	100 or less students	101 - 500 students	501 - 1000 students	1001 or more students
Spelling	3.6	3.0	2.9	3.2
Writing	3.6	3.0	3.1	3.4
Reading	3.1	2.3	2.6	3.0
Oral Language	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.6

Table Pr13e Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by time at the school)

	my first year	1 to 3 years	4 to 6 years	7 to 10 years	more than 10 years
Spelling	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.3
Writing	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.4
Reading	2.6	2.6	2.6	3.0	2.8
Oral Language	2.3	2.0	1.7	3.0	1.3

PCAP and ELAN schools claimed to have made more progress with implementing Writing and Reading than other schools in the survey (see Table Pr13f below).

Table Pr13f Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by special characteristics)

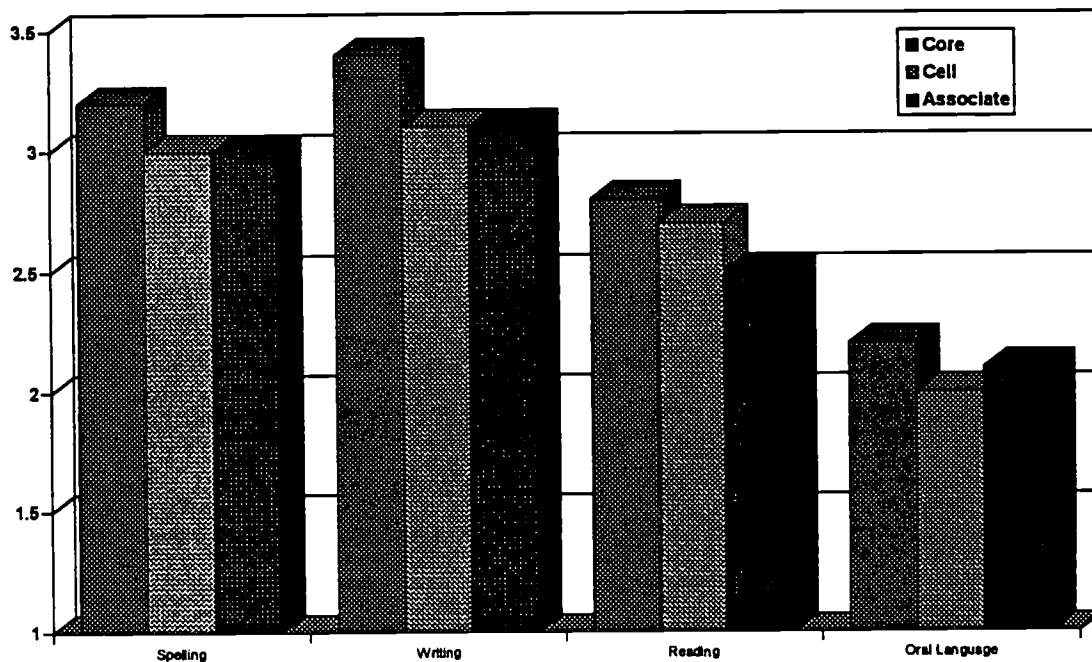
	PSP	ELAN	PCAP
Spelling	3.0	3.1	3.5
Writing	3.4	3.7	3.6
Reading	3.0	3.3	3.1
Oral Language	2.3	2.3	2.2

Core schools (fully funded) claimed higher levels of implementation than Cell schools (partially funded) however there was very little difference between the results from Cell and Associate (self-funded) schools (see Table Pr13f and Figure 2 below). This finding would be expected and should be reassuring of the value of the money expended in funding schools into First Steps.

Table Pr13f Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by type of membership)

	Core	Cell	Associate
Spelling	3.2	3.0	3.0
Writing	3.4	3.1	3.1
Reading	2.8	2.7	2.5
Oral Language	2.2	2.0	2.1

Figure 2 Extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by type of membership)

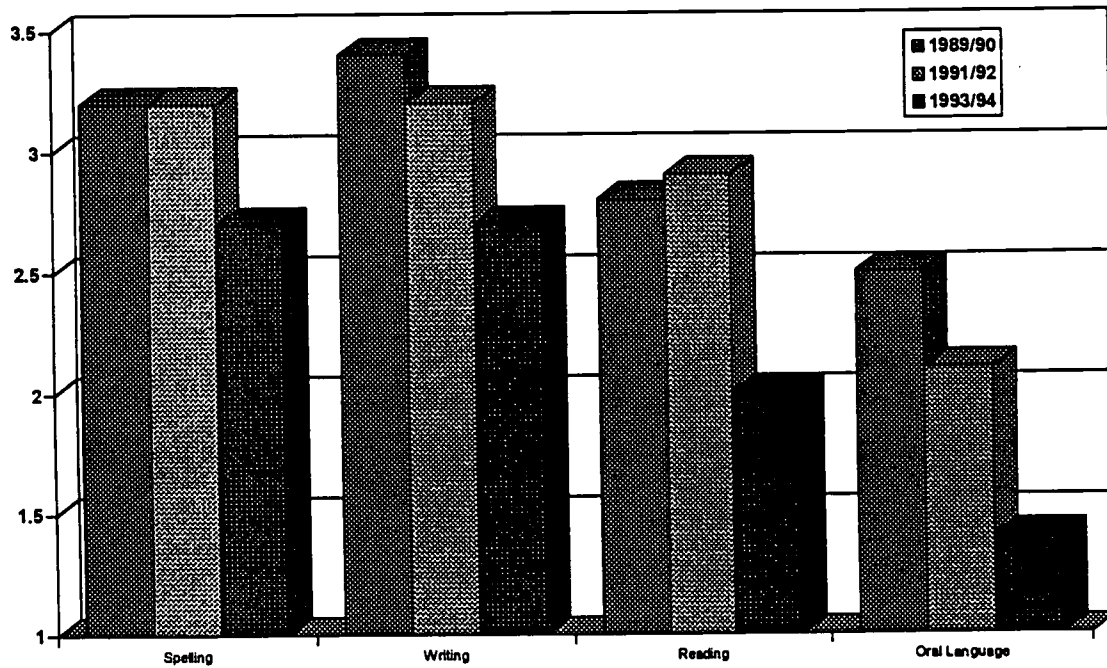


Another reassuring finding should be that overall, schools that have been on the program longest feel they have progressed further with implementing First Steps (see Table Pr13g and Figure 2 below) .

Table Pr13g Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by year of commencement)

	1989/90	1991/92	1993/94
Spelling	3.2	3.2	2.7
Writing	3.4	3.2	2.7
Reading	2.8	2.9	2.0
Oral Language	2.5	2.1	1.4

Figure 3 Extent of Implementation by year of commencement



PART D - EFFECTS ON STUDENT LEARNING AND ATTITUDES

12 Parent Awareness of First Steps

Almost all of the parents who completed the survey had been informed that their school was using First Steps methods in Literacy (see Table Pa2a-b below). This is not a surprising finding as only a few parents were selected at each school and it would be natural for principals to select parents who were commonly at the school.

Table Pa2a Percentage of parents informed that the school is using First Steps strategies for teaching literacy

Size of School	Metro	Country	Remote
No	8.3	2.0	
Yes	91.7	98.0	100

Table Pa2b Percentage of parents informed that the school is using First Steps strategies for teaching literacy

Size of School	Primary	District High	Other
No	5.7	4.3	
Yes	94.3	95.7	100

Notwithstanding the above comment, more than 60 per cent of the parents been to at least one information session on First Steps (see Table Pa3 below). Parents in the country claimed higher levels of knowledge of First Steps and attendance at information sessions.

Table Pa3 Percentage of parents who have attended a parent information session on First Steps (by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote
No	36.0	30.2	27.8
I do not remember	1.0	1.0	8.3
Yes, one	54.1	55.8	36.1
Yes, several	8.9	13.1	27.8

Table Pa4 Percentage of parents who have attended a parent information session on First Steps (by type of school)

	Primary	District High	Other
No	32.7	41.3	30.8
I do not remember	1.6		
Yes, one	55.1	45.7	23.1
Yes, several	10.6	13.0	46.2

Table Pa5a (below) shows that around 80 per cent the parents claimed to have noticed moderate positive changes or major positive changes to their:

child's interest in Reading

child's ability in Reading

child's ability in Writing

over the last 12 months.

At least 60 per cent of the parents claimed at least moderate positive changes in all of the areas listed. While some parents had not noticed any changes, virtually no parents claimed to have noticed any negative effects.

Table Pa5a **The level of changed noticed to their child's schooling**

	Major negative changes	Moderate negative changes	No change	Moderate positive changes	Major positive changes	Mean
Your child's interest in Reading	.5	.9	19.9	48.6	28.8	4.1
Your child's ability in Reading	.7	.9	15.1	50.5	31.9	4.1
Your child's interest in Writing	.4	.4	25.9	48.6	22.0	3.9
Your child's ability in Writing		.5	18.4	53.7	25.3	4.1
Your child's interest in Oral Language		1.3	32.6	48.1	14.4	3.8
Your child's ability in Oral Language		.5	30.4	52.1	12.8	3.8
Your child's interest in Spelling	.4	.5	28.8	45.0	22.8	3.9
Your child's ability in Spelling	.4	1.6	21.5	50.5	24.0	4.0
Your child's interest in Language generally		.5	25.3	49.0	21.3	4.0
Your child's ability in Language generally		.5	20.4	55.4	20.6	4.0

There were no clear patterns in the breakdown of the above data by location or school type, and only very faint patterns to suggest that attendance at a parent information session influenced whether they noticed any change in their child's interest or ability in aspects of Literacy (see Table Pa5d below).

Table Pa5d The level of changed noticed to their child's schooling (mean scores by Attendance at Parent Information Session)

	Attended Parent Information Session		
	No	Yes, one	Yes, several
Your child's interest in Reading	3.9	4.1	4.1
Your child's ability in Reading	4.0	4.1	4.3
Your child's interest in Writing	3.9	3.9	3.9
Your child's ability in Writing	4.0	4.0	4.0
Your child's interest in Oral Language	3.6	3.7	3.7
Your child's ability in Oral Language	3.6	3.7	3.8
Your child's interest in Spelling	3.8	3.9	3.8
Your child's ability in Spelling	3.9	4.0	3.9
Your child's interest in Language generally	3.7	3.9	3.9
Your child's ability in Language generally	3.8	4.0	4.0

Teachers gave similar ratings to parents about the impact of First Steps on students learning. (See Table Te10a below). More than 30 per cent claimed that First Steps had been a **major assistance with students learning about Writing** and over 85 per cent said it had been some assistance.

More than two thirds of the teachers thought that First Steps had been at least some assistance with students learning in all of the aspects of language. The areas of Oral Language was thought to have had least impact, perhaps because many of the schools were not as far into implementing that aspect of the First Steps programme.

Table Te10a Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning

	Much less progress with student learning	Less progress with student learning	No noticeable effect	Some assistance with student learning	Major assistance with student learning	Mean
Students' total language development	.3		17.1	62.0	20.6	4.0
Spelling	.9	.6	19.6	57.5	21.2	4.0
Writing	.6	.3	12.0	55.6	31.5	4.2
Reading	.7	.7	27.0	53.9	17.7	3.9
Oral Language	1.6	1.9	29.2	55.6	11.7	3.7

Breakdowns of these results by features of the programme described previously. The most noteworthy of these were the higher ratings of impact on student learning given by ELAN, PCAP and remote schools (see Table Te10e below).

Table Te10e Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by Special programs)

	PSP	ELAN	PCAP	Remote
Students' total language development	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.3
Spelling	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.1
Writing	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3
Reading	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.0
Oral Language	3.8	4.0	3.8	4.0

14 Changes parents noticed in their children over the last 12 months

The changes parents claimed to have noticed in their child's approach to Literacy over the last 12 months are shown in Table Pa6 below. The major changes were:

Reading

Keen to read, keen to discuss
Exploring wider variety , different genres
Enjoying being read to

Writing

Keen to write and discuss writing
Willing to experiment with a variety of genres

Spelling

Interested, wishes to be accurate
Corrects others and own spelling

Oral Language

Increased confidence, willingness to experiment
Oral language at a good standard
Increased vocabulary

Language generally

General improvement
Increased confidence

Table Pa6a-e Changes that have occurred over the last 12 months

a) Reading

	Comment	No.
1	Keen to read, keen to discuss	348
2	Exploring wider variety , different genres	215
3	Enjoying being read to	108
4	Reading aloud more fluently	46
5	No or little change	25
6	Children still need encouragement to read	22
7	Disappointed with reading standards achieved	15

b) Writing

	Comment	No.
1	Keen to write and discuss writing	166
2	Willing to experiment with a variety of genres	84
3	Improved neatness and style	42
4	Improved	40
5	Not keen, writes as little as possible	27
6	No or little change	24
7	Struggles, needs guidelines	6

c) Spelling		No.
	Comment	
1	Interested, wishes to be accurate	222
2	Corrects others and own spelling	41
3	No or little change	29
4	Little interest, hesitant about spelling	19
5	Work given is too difficult	8
6	List words correct, general spelling often incorrect	4

d) Oral Language		No.
	Comment	
1	Increased confidence, willingness to experiment	109
2	Oral language at a good standard	91
3	Increased vocabulary	46
4	No or little change	43
5	Interest levels improving	24
6	Decreased confidence, shy	12

e) Language generally		No.
	Comment	
1	General improvement	145
2	Increased confidence	51
3	Moderate improvement, it was good anyway	33
4	No improvement, it was generally OK anyway	20
5	Not experimenting with language, takes few risks	6
6	Needs guidelines and correction	2
7	Not using language correctly, increased slang, decreased care	2

15 The impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student attitude to and confidence in language

Table Te12 below shows teachers' ratings of the impact of First Steps on students' attitude to and confidence in aspects of language. It shows that Writing has had most impact (80 per cent rating student attitude as **more positive** or **much more positive**) and Oral Language has had least impact (nearly 60 per cent rating it as **more positive** or **much more positive**).

Table Te12 Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student attitude to and confidence in each aspect of language

	Not covered	Much less positive	Less positive	No effect	More positive	Much more positive	Mean
Students' language development total	13.8		3	27.1	61.8	10.8	3.8
Spelling	12.4		3	27.0	58.9	13.8	3.9
Writing	10.4			20.9	61.3	17.8	4.0
Reading	20.6		1.0	34.3	56.4	8.3	3.7
Oral Language	31.1	.4	.8	39.8	47.8	11.2	3.7

Table Te11 shows the changes to student attitude to learning that teachers consider have resulted from First Steps. The most common changes were said to have been:

Students enthusiastic about language and reading programmes. Improved attitudes.
Spelling programmes relevant to their work and writing - students respond positively.
Students less teacher dependent - more independent.
Children able to work at own levels - less frustration.
Students more willing to 'have-a-go' - take risks.

Table Te11 Changes to students' attitudes to learning that have occurred as a result of First Steps

	Comment	No.
1	Students enthusiastic about language and reading programmes. Improved attitudes.	34
2	Spelling programmes relevant to their work and writing - students respond positively.	31
3	Whole language approach linking all activities.	29
4	Students less teacher dependent - more independent.	28
5	Children able to work at own levels - less frustration.	26
6	Students more willing to 'have-a-go' - take risks.	24
7	Students encouraged to learn from their mistakes.	21
8	No dramatic improvement as strategies already in place.	20
9	Strategies great for teaching informational skills.	20
10	Attitude to oral language has changed/improved.	19
11	Writing frameworks and strategies produce positive results.	19
12	Change in attitudes may not be solely due to FIRST STEPS but also introduction of full time school for 5 year olds.	17
13	Freer activities - more relaxed atmosphere.	8
14	Maybe children 'at risk' develop more confidence with coping with activities given.	7
15	Not noticeable as very little has been done using FIRST STEPS.	7
16	PSP school and have had major literacy project in place to foster positive learning attitudes.	4
17	Proof of long term benefits of FIRST STEPS will be the comparison with children who have not participated in S.	3
18	Difficult to assess as have been doing the suggested strategies for many years.	3

16. Examples where First Steps has helped individual students

Teachers were invited to describe examples where First Steps has helped individual children. Their answers covered a wide range of situations which have been drawn into Table Te13 below. The most common categories of replies were:

More able students can advance at own pace on individual programmes.

Language and reading programme develops positive attitudes.

Where success is not a right or wrong answer encourages those at risk to 'have-a-go' and become more confident.

Table Te13 Examples where First Steps has helped individual students.

	Comment	No.
1	More able students can advance at own pace on individual programmes.	31
2	Language and reading programme develops positive attitudes.	30
3	Where success is not a right or wrong answer encourages those at risk to 'have-a-go' and become more confident.	27
4	Spelling activities/strategies have been particularly useful in less able students.	23
5	Child able to present a written piece in a logical sequence thanks to frameworks and strategies.	21
6	Child not willing to talk in large class group eventually gained confidence using strategies such as 'what, where, when	19
7	Individual group work now carried out more willingly.	15
8	It has been useful to show concerned parents what a child can do on a continuum.	11
9	Continuum focuses on positive results.	9
10	Continua has helped identify specific areas of concern.	9
11	Spelling journals cater for all students, 'at risk' to very bright.	8
12	Word banks have helped 'very beginning writer' to use strategies eg. phase matching on ABC to consolidate skills.	6
13	Class charts identifying spelling strategies have helped individuals.	5
14	Less able students not helped at all.	5
15	Programme has shown the importance of slowing down for weaker children.	5
16	FIRST STEPS has helped almost all children both 'at risk' and those developing normally.	4
17	Selection of appropriate and stimulating strategies.	4
18	Use only as a strategy and structure to teach SOS.	2
19	Under achievers feel less segregated as working at own level.	2
20	With the emphasis on oral language the transference to writing is amazing.	2

17. The impact of First Steps on students' use of language strategies

Table Te14 reports teachers' ratings of the impact of First Steps upon students' use of a range of language strategies. The table shows that **at least 75 per cent of teachers said there had been at least a moderate amount of change** in the use students made of all of the strategies, and at least a quarter of the teachers said there had been a considerable degree of change.

The highest levels of change were said to have occurred with regard to the strategies:

Text structures

Overall writing strategies

Planning strategies

Spelling strategies

Spelling journal

Table Te14 Ratings the impact of First Steps on students' use of the following strategies

	Not covered	No change	Very little change	Moderate amount of change	Considerable degree of change	Major change	Mean
Reading							
Meaning making strategies	38.6	4.6	16.9	52.3	23.5	2.7	3.0
Word identification strategies	27.7	4.2	19.0	46.0	28.5	2.3	3.1
Problem solving strategies	28.5	4.2	20.0	48.5	25.4	1.9	3.0
Writing							
Planning strategies	15.3	2.6	2.3	36.4	37.4	11.4	3.4
Editing strategies	17.3	3.3	17.3	44.2	26.2	9.0	3.2
Text structures	17.0	2.3	10.6	32.1	38.4	16.6	3.6
Overall writing strategies	14.3	2.6	10.6	35.9	39.4	11.5	3.5
Spelling							
Spelling strategies	16.8	2.3	11.9	42.9	34.7	8.3	3.3
Spelling journal	26.1	5.6	15.2	27.5	34.2	17.5	3.4

18. The effect of First Steps on the school as a whole

Table Pr14 below shows a summary of principal's unstructured comments about the effect of First Steps on the school as a whole. The most common, but hardly unified, comments fitted into the categories:

Whole school, positive approach.

Improved teaching/planning strategies.

Teachers aware of need to reassess traditional teaching methods, more aware of importance of language development.

A unified approach to teaching and recording as a result of the continuum between years.

Confusion, not enough information to implement FIRST STEPS correctly.

Continua too time consuming.

Table Pr14 Principals' views of the effect First Steps is having on the school as a whole

	Comment	No.
1	Whole school, positive approach.	62
2	Improved teaching/planning strategies.	35
3	Teachers aware of need to reassess traditional teaching methods, more aware of importance of language development.	24
4	A unified approach to teaching and recording as a result of the continuum between years.	23
5	Confusion, not enough information to implement FIRST STEPS correctly.	19
6	Continua too time consuming.	14
7	Reporting to parents increased and improved and parent involvement increased.	7
8	Teachers divided as to First Steps.	6
9	Financially draining.	4
10	Teachers adapting FIRST STEPS to suit personal styles of teaching.	4
11	Negative effects minimal.	3

Table Te15 shows similar comments from teachers. The most common comments were:

Staff supportive.

Allows teachers to get clearer understanding of where children are at from continua.

There is added stress and confusion in some teachers as more work involved.

Positive "buzz" as teachers implement all strategies.

More effective environment and more effective learning.

Does nothing for those that ignore change.

Consolidates what some teachers already know.

Many teachers do not know how to use FIRST STEPS continua for further planning.

Table Te15 Teachers' views on the effect of First Steps on the school as a whole

	Comment	No.
1	Staff supportive.	28
2	Allows teachers to get clearer understanding of where children are at from continua.	27
3	There is added stress and confusion in some teachers as more work involved.	25
4	Positive "buzz" as teachers implement all strategies.	25
5	More effective environment and more effective learning.	23
6	Does nothing for those that ignore change.	21
7	Consolidates what some teachers already know.	20
8	Many teachers do not know how to use FIRST STEPS continua for further planning.	19
9	Not a great deal.	18
10	Better grasp of what whole school is doing.	18
11	Communication between staff more effective as criteria clearly identified at each level. A focus for evaluation planning and school development.	12
12	Staff do not have time to discuss FIRST STEPS processes and how it is progressing or for consolidation and revision.	6
13	Uniformity with teaching strategies and evaluation.	6
14	Able to look at specific areas of need that need to be covered.	6
15	School reporting has changed/ under review.	5
16	FIRST STEPS continua has provided information for MIS.	5
17	Placing children on continua takes a long time.	5
18	Use in school development planning.	3
19	School divided into those that have embraced FIRST STEPS and those that either ignore change or resent having it imposed upon them.	2
20	Use of Continua has made for uniform assessment to a degree.	1
21	Children benefit greatly.	2

Table Pa7a below shows parents' views on the effects of First Steps on the school. It indicated that 65-70 per cent of the parents considered that First Steps had resulted in a **moderate to major positive changes to (in this order):**

Your feelings about how language is taught in the school
Your understanding of how the school reports on Language areas
Your understanding of how children develop Language
Your understanding of the school's Language program
Your ability to help your child in Language areas

Table Pa7a The effects of First Steps on their child's schooling

	Major negative changes	Moderate negative changes	No change	Moderate positive changes	Major positive changes	Mean
Your ability to help your child in Language areas	.3	.6	32.7	52.6	13.5	3.8
Your understanding of the school's Language program	.3	2.0	27.1	50.3	20.3	3.9
Your feelings about how language is taught in the school	.3	2.3	23.3	44.3	29.4	4.0
Your understanding of how the school reports on Language areas	.3	2.6	26.0	49.7	21.4	3.9
Your understanding of how children develop Language		2.0	27.7	46.6	23.8	3.9

Breakdowns of these results by location, school type and special features not show any interpretable patterns.

19. How people feel about First Steps

As a summary of opinion people were asked how they felt about First Steps. In each case the positive and enthusiastic comment vastly outweigh any negative comments. The most common comments from parents were:

Positive - a very worthwhile project

Child's self esteem increased

Need more information/workshops, post newsletters directly to parents

Can't tell if changes in my child are due to First Steps or growing older

The resources are the key. The real resources are the teachers and parents who support it

Children can develop at their own rate

Don't know much about First Steps

Table Pa8 How parents feel about First Steps

	Comment	No.
1	Positive - a very worthwhile project	67
2	Child's self esteem increased	38
3	Need more information/workshops, post newsletters directly to parents	31
4	Can't tell if changes in my child are due to First Steps or growing older	27
5	The resources are the key. The real resources are the teachers and parents who support it	16
6	Children can develop at their own rate	14
7	Don't know much about First Steps	14
8	No change in my child	9
9	Reporting/feedback useful and informative	9
10	First Steps does not cover the basics and is not geared to low achievers	8
11	Teachers absent from the classroom too often	7
12	First Steps identifies the weaknesses and teachers can act accordingly	5
13	Children do not get enough guidelines/expectations and are not motivated to achieve	4
14	Reports do not give parents a clear idea of child's ability or achievement	3
15	Needs to be continuity of assessment between classes, years and schools	2
16	First Steps has not been a benefit to my child	2
17	School work needs to be corrected on the spot, not after the child has forgotten he did it	1

Table Pr15 below reports how principals feel about First Steps. The most common comments were:

Positive - a good set of strategies.

Need more backup and information, eg. more in-services, graduate teachers with a better understanding of FIRST STEPS.

Work/marking overload.

Financially draining, resent 'sell-out' to publishers/commercial supplier.

Continua misused as a marking tool, too subjective.

Table Pr15 How principals feel about First Steps

	Comment	No.
1	Positive - a good set of strategies.	97
2	Need more backup and information, eg. more in-services, graduate teachers with a better understanding of FIRST STEPS.	15
3	Work/marking overload.	13
4	Financially draining, resent 'sell-out' to publishers/commercial supplier.	11
5	Continua misused as a marking tool, too subjective.	10
6	Unreasonable expectations of implementation, especially time factor.	8
7	At risk students are well catered for.	8
8	FIRST STEPS depends on staff and parent support for its success.	7
9	Staff divided, some like, some do not.	6
10	Need to make much more use of parents as a resource.	3
11	Does not have a positive effect on low achievers.	3
12	Staff movements - too often and too difficult to monitor.	2
13	FIRST STEPS does not take into account teachers' previous strategies and experience.	2
14	Negative - founded on dubious educational theory.	1

Table Te16 shows that the most common comments from teachers were:

Positive attitude towards philosophy, ideas and strategies.

No evidence that it helps less able students.

Generally more time needed.

Increases workload but worthwhile.

Very positive response. Excellent, fantastic, etc.

Table Te16 How teachers feel about First Steps

	Comments	No.
1	Positive attitude towards philosophy, ideas and strategies.	57
2	No evidence that it helps less able students.	26
3	Increases workload but worthwhile.	21
4	Very positive response. Excellent, fantastic, etc.	21
5	Generally more time needed.	21
6	Impossible to take on all subject areas at once.	19
7	Teaching has improved as a result of FIRST STEPS.	19
8	Not all strategies/activities are new.	19
9	The programme in-servicing has improved greatly since beginning.	12
10	DC helpful in evaluation.	12
11	Unfortunate that FIRST STEPS has been sold to private corp as many teachers will not benefit due to cost involved.	11
12	Funding must be maintained to ensure continuation of FIRST STEPS as a resource for teachers.	9
13	Has given confidence in planning whole language approach.	9
14	Too much emphasis place on continua.	9
15	Continua valuable indicators to child development.	7
16	Very difficult aspect will be the use of the new Longman Cheshire books as many teachers inserviced in Education Department books and plotting is done on these.	7
17	Not sure about continua - inconsistencies.	5
18	Needs to start in Grade 1 and be sequential.	5
19	Great programme if data gathered is used correctly.	5
20	Some teachers have found it valuable to use direct instruction on less able students.	5
21	The general package is good as a 'guide' to teaching. Feel qualified to use aspects that I agree and feel comfortable with.	4
22	Parent pack good idea as it gives parents examples of what children might be doing and helpful hints to move children on.	4
23	We need to be aware that although learning is development there are other reasons for non-achievement	3
24	Is it being covered at University and colleges.	3
25	Does not give Aboriginal ESL students necessary skills.	3

Table Tel6 shows that the most common comments from Focus Teachers were:

Very positive response. Excellent, fantastic, etc.

Positive attitude towards philosophy, ideas and strategies.

Continuum helpful in evaluation.

Funding must be maintained to ensure continuation of FIRST STEPS as a resource for teachers.

Table FT15 How Focus Teachers feel about First Steps

	Comments	Freq
1	Very positive response. Excellent, fantastic, etc.	49
2	Positive attitude towards philosophy, ideas and strategies.	42
3	Continuum helpful in evaluation.	19
4	Funding must be maintained to ensure continuation of FIRST STEPS as a resource for teachers.	12
5	Generally more time needed.	11
6	Not all strategies/activities are new.	11
7	Increases workload but worthwhile.	9
8	Teaching has improved as a result of FIRST STEPS.	8
9	Too much emphasis place on continua.	6
10	Continua valuable indicators to child development.	7
11	No evidence that it helps less able students.	4
12	We need to be aware that although learning is development there are other reasons for non-achievement	4
13	Impossible to take on all subject areas at once.	4
14	Parent pack good idea as it gives parents examples of what children might be doing and helpful hints to move children on.	3
15	Very difficult aspect will be the use of the new Longman Cheshire books as many teachers inserviced in Education Department books and plotting is done on these.	3
16	Has given confidence in planning whole language approach.	3
17	Not sure about continua - inconsistencies.	3
18	Needs to start in Grade 1 and be sequential.	2
19	Some teachers have found it valuable to use direct instruction on less able students.	2
20	Unfortunate that FIRST STEPS has been sold to private corp as many teachers will not benefit due to cost involved.	2
21	Great programme if data gathered is used correctly.	2
22	The general package is good as a 'guide' to teaching. Feel qualified to use aspects that I agree and feel comfortable with.	2
23	Is it being covered at University and colleges.	1
24	The programme in-servicing has improved greatly since beginning.	1
25	Does not give Aboriginal ESL students necessary skills.	1

5.0 CONCLUSION

The four data sets: parents, principals, teachers and Focus Teachers all deliver the same message. They say:

- Each of the four surveys reached a representative sample of respondent from a variety of year levels, locations, school types, school sizes and schools with students with special needs (eg ELAN).
- Almost all schools were implementing First Steps on a K to 7 basis.
- All of the First Steps professional development was regarded as at least *quite valuable* by at least 70 per cent of the teachers, and the Writing professional development viewed as *very valuable* or *extremely valuable* by nearly two thirds of the teachers.
- Schools that had been using First Steps longest gave the professional development highest rating and were further along with implementing its suggestions.
- Country schools and especially remote country schools valued the First Steps professional development more than metropolitan schools and had progressed further with implementation.
- While all aspects of the First Steps model were valued, the most highly rated aspects were the professional development courses, the ELAN teachers and the Focus Teachers.
- More than 80 per cent of teachers rated First Steps as causing at least a moderate amount of change to their:
 - School development planning*
 - Language policies*
 - Language programs*
 - Teaching methods*
 - Monitoring using the continua*
 - Working with students "at risk"*
- Teachers indicated that First Steps had given them a wider range of teaching strategies and increased confidence, however they also raised concerns about the time taken and the amount of work involved.
- Around 85 per cent of the principals considered that the implementation of First Steps practices were *well under way* or *established for Writing*. The figures for Spelling, Reading and Oral Language were around 80, 70 and 50 per cent respectively.
- Focus Teachers typically had a more positive view of the value of First Steps and the extent of implementation than either the principals or teachers.
- On average, Core schools were further developed with their implementation than Cell schools which in turn had progressed further than Associate schools.
- PCAP and ELAN schools claimed to have made more progress with implementing Writing and Reading than other schools in the survey.
- Most of the parents had heard about First Steps and around 80 per cent the parents claimed over the last 12 months to have noticed *moderate positive changes* or *major positive changes* to their:
 - child's interest in Reading*
 - child's ability in Reading*
 - child's ability in Writing.*
- More than two thirds of the teachers thought that First Steps had been at least some assistance with students learning in all of the aspects of language.
- The most noteworthy of the ratings of the impact on student learning were the higher ratings given by ELAN, PCAP and remote schools

- Eighty per cent of the teachers rated student attitude in writing as *more positive*. While all of the areas of language were thought to have improved, the Oral Language component was thought to have had least impact, however nearly 60 per cent of teachers rated students as *more positive* or *much more positive* about Oral Language.
- The most common changes to student attitude to learning that teachers consider have resulted from First Steps. were said to have been:
 - Students enthusiastic about language and reading programmes. Improved attitudes.*
 - Spelling programmes relevant to their work and writing - students respond positively.*
 - Students less teacher dependent - more independent.*
 - Children able to work at own levels - less frustration.*
 - Students more willing to 'have-a-go' - take risks.*
- At least 75 per cent of teachers said there had been at least a moderate amount of change in the use students made of all of the strategies, and at least a quarter of the teachers said there had been a considerable degree of change.
- The highest levels of change were said to have occurred with regard to the strategies:
 - Text structures*
 - Overall writing strategies*
 - Planning strategies*
- The most common comments from principals about the effects of First Steps on their school were:
 - Whole school, positive approach.*
 - Improved teaching/planning strategies.*
 - Teachers aware of need to reassess traditional teaching methods, more aware of importance of language development.*
 - A unified approach to teaching and recording as a result of the continuum between years.*
 - Confusion, not enough information to implement FIRST STEPS correctly.*
 - Continua too time consuming.*
- The most common comments from teachers were:
 - Staff supportive.*
 - Allows teachers to get clearer understanding of where children are at from continua.*
 - There is added stress and confusion in some teachers as more work involved.*
 - Positive "buzz" as teachers implement all strategies.*
 - More effective environment and more effective learning.*
 - Does nothing for those that ignore change.*
 - Consolidates what some teachers already know.*
 - Many teachers do not know how to use FIRST STEPS continua for further planning.*
- The most common comments from parents were:
 - Positive - a very worthwhile project*
 - Child's self esteem increased*
 - Need more information/workshops, post newsletters directly to parents*
 - Can't tell if changes in my child are due to First Steps or growing older*
 - The resources are the key. The real resources are the teachers and parents who support it*
 - Children can develop at their own rate*
 - Don't know much about First Steps*
- The most common comments from Focus Teachers were:
 - Very positive response. Excellent, fantastic, etc.*
 - Positive attitude towards philosophy, ideas and strategies.*

The survey clearly reinforced the findings from earlier ACER surveys that schools were making progress with implementing First Steps strategies and that teachers, parents and principals saw its suggestions as contributing significantly to students acquiring skills in Literacy.

**APPENDIX
TO THE
SURVEY OF
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE LITERACY COMPONENT OF
THE FIRST STEPS PROJECT IN WA.**

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- Appendix 2 The Data Tables reporting the view of parents
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Responses from Principals

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Appendix 1 **Responses from Principals**

PART A PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table Pr1 Type of school

Type of School	Metro	Country	Remote	Total
Primary	63	41	4	108
District High		8		8
Other	3	1	1	5
Total	66	50	5	121

Table Pr2 Size of school

Size of School	Metro	Country	Remote	Total
100 or less students	2	12	4	18
101 - 300 students	27	8	1	36
301 - 700 students	31	20		51
701 or more students	6	10		16

Table Pr3a Length of time at that school

Time at this school	Metro	Country	Remote	Total
my first year	11	10	4	25
1 to 3 years	19	14	1	34
4 to 6 years	20	11		31
7 to 10 years	13	6		19
more than 10 years	3	9		12

Table Pr4a Type of involvement with First Steps (by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote	Total
Core school	21	18	1	40
Cell school	14	8	1	23
Associate school	31	20	3	54
PSP school	18	12	1	31
ELAN school	9	6	1	16
PCAP school		16	4	20
Remote Country school			4	4

Table Pr4b Type of involvement with First Steps (by type of school)

	Primary	District High	Remote
Core school	34	4	2
Cell school	22		1
Associate school	48	4	2
PSP school	29		2
ELAN school	14	1	1
PCAP school	15	4	1
Remote Country school			4

Table Pr5 Stage of implementation of First Steps (by year of commencement)

Implementation	Year commenced on First Steps			Total
	1989-1990	1991-1992	1993-1994	
K only				
K to 3 only	3	1	2	6
K to 7	37	42	23	102
Year 4 and 5 only				
Year 6 and 7 only				
Other	4	4	4	12

PART B - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**Table Pr6 Ratings of aspects of the First Steps model in terms of their impact on the implementation of First Steps**

	not had	of no use	not very valuable	quite valuable	very valuable	outstandingly valuable	Mean
Collaborative teachers	57.0	1.9	11.5	28.8	30.8	26.9	3.2
Focus A Teachers - to arrange In-class support	12.4	3.8	9.4	25.5	44.3	17.0	3.6
Focus A Teachers - to provide Model lessons	25.6	6.7	21.1	23.2	38.9	10.0	3.6
Focus A Teachers - as a source of advice	6.6	2.7	11.8	17.7	57.7	20.4	3.7
The First Steps School Development Officers	4.9		13.0	30.4	42.6	13.9	3.8
ELAN teacher	81.8	4.5	4.5		63.6	27.3	3.9
Professional Development courses	22.3		4.3	26.7	50.0	19.0	4.1

Table Pr7a Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning

	not had	Much less progress with student learning	Less progress with student learning	No noticeable effect	Some assistance with student learning	Major assistance with student learning	Mean
Students' total language development	5.8			23.7	58.8	17.5	3.9
Spelling	7.4		1.8	17.9	60.7	19.6	4.0
Writing	6.6			16.8	45.1	38.1	4.2
Reading	14.0		1.0	21.2	60.6	17.3	3.9
Oral Language	27.2	3.4		29.5	47.7	19.3	3.8

Table Pr7b Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student total language development (by type of school)

Type of School	Much less progress with student learning	Less progress with student learning	No noticeable effect	Some assistance with student learning	Major assistance with student learning	Mean
Primary			22.5	57.8	18.6	4.0
District High			37.5	62.5		3.6
Other			20.0	60.0	20.0	4.0
Total			23.5	58.3	17.4	3.8

Table Pr7c Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student total language development (by size of school)

Size of School	Much less progress with student learning	Less progress with student learning	No noticeable effect	Some assistance with student learning	Major assistance with student learning	Mean
100 or less students			25.0	68.8	6.3	3.8
101 - 500 students			27.3	51.5	18.2	3.9
501 - 1000 students			27.5	49.0	23.5	4.0
1001 or more students				93.3	6.7	4.1

Table Pr7d Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student total language development (by time at the school)

Time at this school	Much less progress with student learning	Less progress with student learning	No noticeable effect	Some assistance with student learning	Major assistance with student learning	Mean
my first year			1.7	50.0	8.3	3.7
1 to 3 years			12.5	65.5	18.8	4.1
4 to 6 years			35.7	50.	14.3	3.8
7 to 10 years				63.2	36.8	4.4
more than 10 years			25.0	66.7	8.3	3.8

Table Pr7e Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student total language development (by location)

Type of School	Much less progress with student learning	Less progress with student learning	No noticeable effect	Some assistance with student learning	Major assistance with student learning	Mean
Metro			27.4	50.0	21.0	3.9
Country			18.4	67.3	14.3	4.0
Remote			15.0	75.0		3.9

Table Pr8 Why First Steps is having this effect on student learning

Students' total language development

	Comment	No.
1	Teaching targeted to specific areas, organised sequential teaching.	46
2	Language seen as a total approach.	21
3	Little improvement is an achievement.	16
4	Improved student attitude to work.	10
5	Children can measure own progress due to more consistent assessment.	2

Spelling

	Comment	No.
1	Improved teaching strategies (eg. sequential lessons building on knowledge.	486
2	Individual lessons direct to child's level of ability.	32
3	Improved student attitude to work.	6
4	Too disjointed, some teachers using FS, some using other strategies.	6

Writing

	Comment	No.
1	Improved teaching strategies.	64
2	Variety of genres expanded.	25
3	Children stimulated to write by teacher modelling.	10
4	Improved student attitude, children taking more responsibility for own work.	5

Reading

	Comment	No.
1	Improved teaching strategies by targetting individual needs.	45
2	Improved student attitude to work.	20
3	Total approach to reading, as an integral part of learning.	9
4	Lower achievers not catered for.	3
5	Process of plotting, assessment disadvantages lower achievers.	1

Oral Language

	Comment	No.
1	Improved teaching strategies to cater for all achievement levels.	22
2	Improved attitude, increased involvement.	14
3	Oral language integrated with all subjects, a wider variety explored.	5

Table Pr9 Changes to students' attitudes to learning that have occurred as a result of First Steps.

	Comment	No.
1	Increased interest, a more positive attitude from children.	63
2	Children confident with evaluation (less test time traumas) and are taking increased responsibility for own learning.	20
3	None, few changes.	3
4	With a wider range of materials and resources available children are exploring language further.	2

Table Pr10 Examples where First Steps has helped individual students.

	Comment	No.
1	Identification of children needing remediation, specifically geared learning activities.	53
2	With more guidelines children are more confident of their own abilities.	11
3	Self esteem increased as children work for achievable levels.	11
4	Strategies encourage all achievers (in particular advanced children) to achieve even further.	10
5	Motivational materials, activities and strategies encourage children to learn and enjoy.	8
6	Children from Aboriginal, ESC, disadvantaged, non-print enriched backgrounds are very well catered for in the FS project.	7

PART D EFFECTS ON THE SCHOOL

Table Pr11a The impact First Steps has had on aspects of your school

	No change	Very little change	Moderate amount of change	A considerable degree of change	Major change	Mean
School development planning	4.1	11.6	27.3	45.5	9.1	3.5
Language policies	3.3	12.4	32.2	38.0	11.6	3.4
Language programs	.8	9.1	29.8	44.6	14.0	3.6
Teaching methods		17.4	29.8	42.1	9.1	3.4
Monitoring using the continua	3.3	11.6	22.3	35.5	25.6	3.7
Reporting to parents	12.4	31.4	31.4	16.5	6.6	2.7
Working with students "at risk"	3.3	16.5	39.7	28.1	10.7	3.3
Staff development	2.5	9.9	18.2	43.0	24.8	3.8

Table Pr11b The impact First Steps has had on aspects of your school (mean scores by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote	Primary	District High	Other
School development planning	3.30	3.75	2.25	3.50	3.00	3.00
Language policies	3.35	3.61	1.75	3.56	2.62	1.40
Language programs	3.39	4.04	2.50	3.64	3.50	3.60
Teaching methods	3.17	3.86	2.75	3.43	3.87	2.80
Monitoring using the continua	3.55	4.00	2.50	3.65	4.38	3.60
Reporting to parents	2.41	3.10	3.50	2.81	2.00	2.20
Working with students "at risk"	3.14	3.49	2.75	3.31	2.25	4.00
Staff development	3.77	4.02	1.25	3.82	3.87	3.00

Table Pr11c The impact First Steps has had on aspects of your school (mean scores by special characteristics)

	PSP	ELAN	PCAP	Remote
School development planning	3.5	4.0	3.4	2.0
Language policies	3.8	3.9	3.0	2.0
Language programs	3.9	4.57	3.7	3.0
Teaching methods	3.8	4.2	3.7	3.0
Monitoring using the continua	3.9	4.5	3.8	3.0
Reporting to parents	3.0	3.3	3.2	4.0
Working with students "at risk"	3.7	4.5	3.0	3.0
Staff development	4.1	4.5	3.3	1.0

Table Pr11d The impact First Steps has had on aspects of your school (mean scores by type of membership)

	Core	Cell	Associate
School development planning	3.58	3.73	3.17
Language policies	3.41	3.68	3.24
Language programs	3.59	3.77	3.56
Teaching methods	3.49	3.45	3.39
Monitoring using the continua	4.00	3.59	3.50
Reporting to parents	2.90	3.09	2.43
Working with students "at risk"	3.18	3.68	3.11
Staff development	3.77	4.05	3.65

Table Pr12. Changes that have occurred as a result of First Steps

a) With regard to the teaching of Spelling

	Comment	No.
1	Strategies pertinent to learning eg. journal use.	56
2	More emphasis on self motivated 'have-a-go' learning.	38
3	More focus on process than product.	6
4	No/little change.	3
5	Deterioration in effectiveness of teaching.	2

b) With regard to the teaching of Writing

	Comment	No.
1	Increased range genres and teacher modelling.	50
2	Teachers more aware of individual needs and using appropriate strategies.	22
3	Framework used well eg. standardised forms.	22
4	'Have-a-go' writing emphasised.	11
5	No/little change.	3

c) With regard to the teaching of Reading

	Comment	No.
1	Use of appropriate strategies for individual needs.	40
2	Text variety increased.	16
3	No/little change.	9
4	Teachers not catering to all ability levels.	2

d) With regard to the teaching of Oral Language

	Comment	No.
1	Oral language recognised as an integrated/cross curriculum approach.	30
2	Variety of oral language increased as children become more confident.	18
3	No/little change.	10
4	Basic skills not reinforced.	2

e) In terms of supporting students at risk, or those with learning difficulties.

	Comment	No.
1	A more positive approach to remediation as children are still seen as valuable class members.	45
2	Improvement in strategies.	17
3	Children can develop at own pace.	11
4	No/little change.	7

f) In terms of how it has affected classroom organisation.

	Comment	No.
1	More parent involvement in children's learning.	35
2	Improved approach to programming, grouping.	16
3	Significantly increased teacher workload means more class disruption especially as teacher is absent more often.	14
4	Both teachers and children taken more control of the classroom, eg. children more willing to listen, children improving and expanding an in class library.	10
5	Increased area, time and resources for language teaching.	6

g) In terms of assessment.

	Comment	No.
1	Works well to assist with reporting.	72
2	Very time consuming.	11
3	No/little change.	7
4	Parents (and some teachers) find it difficult to assess children's progress as they remain on the same level for some time.	6
5	Greater consistency, teacher to teacher, of assessment.	3
6	Staff have attended in-service.	1

h) In terms of staff development.

	Comment	No.
1	Encourages whole school policy, sharing and discussing.	48
2	Focus A teachers a very positive element in FS.	15
3	An increased staff awareness of improved teaching strategies.	4
4	No/few changes.	5

Table Pr13a Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented

	Not had yet	Not started	Just beginning	Well under way	Established	Mean
Spelling	8.3	2.7	18.9	36.9	41.4	3.2
Writing	7.5	1.8	13.4	42.0	42.9	3.3
Reading	13.3	4.8	22.9	47.6	24.8	2.9
Oral Language	12.4	29.2	31.1	22.6	17.0	2.3

Table Pr13b Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote
Spelling	2.81	3.35	3.50
Writing	2.97	3.41	3.50
Reading	2.29	3.10	3.25
Oral Language	2.00	2.16	2.75

Table Pr13c Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by type of school)

	Primary	D High	Other
Spelling	3.06	3.38	2.60
Writing	3.13	3.75	3.20
Reading	2.62	3.25	2.80
Oral Language	1.96	3.25	3.00

Table Pr13d Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by size of school)

	100 or less students	101 - 500 students	501 - 1000 students	1001 or more students
Spelling	3.6	3.0	2.9	3.2
Writing	3.6	3.0	3.1	3.4
Reading	3.1	2.3	2.6	3.0
Oral Language	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.6

Table Pr13e Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by time at the school)

	my first year	1 to 3 years	4 to 6 years	7 to 10 years	more than 10 years
Spelling	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.3
Writing	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.4
Reading	2.6	2.6	2.6	3.0	2.8
Oral Language	2.3	2.0	1.7	3.0	1.3

Table Pr13f Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by special characteristics)

	PSP	ELAN	PCAP	Remote
Spelling	3.0	3.1	3.5	4.0
Writing	3.4	3.7	3.6	4.0
Reading	3.0	3.3	3.1	4.0
Oral Language	2.3	2.3	2.2	3.0

Table Pr13f Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by type of membership)

	Core	Cell	Associate
Spelling	3.2	3.0	3.0
Writing	3.4	3.1	3.1
Reading	2.8	2.7	2.5
Oral Language	2.2	2.0	2.1

Table Pr13g Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by year of commencement)

	1989/90	1991/92	1993/94
Spelling	3.2	3.2	2.7
Writing	3.4	3.2	2.7
Reading	2.8	2.9	2.0
Oral Language	2.5	2.1	1.4

PART E SUMMARY

Table Pr14 Effect First Steps is having on the school as a whole

	Comment	No.
1	Whole school, positive approach.	62
2	Improved teaching/planning strategies.	35
3	Teachers aware of need to reassess traditional teaching methods, more aware of importance of language development.	24
4	A unified approach to teaching and recording as a result of the continuum between years.	23
5	Confusion, not enough information to implement FS correctly.	19
6	Continua too time consuming.	14
7	Reporting to parents increased and improved and parent involvement increased.	7
8	Teachers divided as to First Steps.	6
9	Financially draining.	4
10	Teachers adapting FS to suit personal styles of teaching.	4
11	Negative effects minimal.	3

Table Pr15 How you feel about First Steps

	Comment	No.
1	Positive - a good set of strategies.	97
2	Need more backup and information, eg. more in-services, graduate teachers with a better understanding of FS.	15
3	Work/marking overload.	13
4	Financially draining, resent 'sell-out' to publishers/commercial supplier.	11
5	Continua misused as a marking tool, too subjective.	10
6	Unreasonable expectations of implementation, especially time factor.	8
7	At risk students are well catered for.	8
8	FS depends on staff and parent support for its success.	7
9	Staff divided, some like, some do not.	6
10	Need to make much more use of parents as a resource.	3
11	Does not have a positive effect on low achievers.	3
12	Staff movements - too often and too difficult to monitor.	2
13	FS does not take into account teachers' previous strategies and experience.	2
14	Negative - founded on dubious educational theory.	1

PART A PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table Parents1	Type of school
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Appendix 2 Responses from Parents

PART A PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table Parents1 Type of school

Type of School	Metro	Country	Remote	Total
Primary	309	159	22	490
District High	2	38	6	46
Other	3	2	8	13
Total	314	199	36	549

Table Parents2a Percentage of parents informed that the school is using First Steps strategies for teaching literacy

Size of School	Metro	Country	Remote
No	8.3	2.0	
Yes	91.7	98.0	100

Table Parents2b Percentage of parents informed that the school is using First Steps strategies for teaching literacy

Size of School	Primary	District High	Other
No	5.7	4.3	
Yes	94.3	95.7	100

Table Parents3 Percentage of parents who have attended a parent information session on First Steps (by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote
No	36.0	30.2	27.8
I do not remember	1.0	1.0	8.3
Yes, one	54.1	55.8	36.1
Yes, several	8.9	13.1	27.8

Table Parents4 Percentage of parents who have attended a parent information session on First Steps (by type of school)

	Primary	District High	Othet
No	32.7	41.3	30.8
I do not remember	1.6		
Yes, one	55.1	45.7	23.1
Yes, several	10.6	13.0	46.2

Table Parents5a The level of changed noticed to their child's schooling

	Major negative changes	Moderate negative changes	No change	Moderate positive changes	Major positive changes	Mean
Your child's interest in Reading	.5	.9	19.9	48.6	28.8	4.1
Your child's ability in Reading	.7	.9	15.1	50.5	31.9	4.1
Your child's interest in Writing	.4	.4	25.9	48.6	22.0	3.9
Your child's ability in Writing		.5	18.4	53.7	25.3	4.1
Your child's interest in Oral Language		1.3	32.6	48.1	14.4	3.8
Your child's ability in Oral Language		.5	30.4	52.1	12.8	3.8
Your child's interest in Spelling	.4	.5	28.8	45.0	22.8	3.9
Your child's ability in Spelling	.4	1.6	21.5	50.5	24.0	4.0
Your child's interest in Language generally		.5	25.3	49.0	21.3	4.0
Your child's ability in Language generally		.5	20.4	55.4	20.6	4.0

Table Parents5b The level of changed noticed to their child's schooling (mean scores by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote
Your child's interest in Reading	4.1	4.0	3.9
Your child's ability in Reading	4.1	4.1	4.0
Your child's interest in Writing	3.9	3.8	4.2
Your child's ability in Writing	4.0	3.9	4.2
Your child's interest in Oral Language	3.7	3.6	3.6
Your child's ability in Oral Language	3.7	3.7	3.6
Your child's interest in Spelling	3.8	3.8	4.1
Your child's ability in Spelling	3.9	3.8	4.2
Your child's interest in Language generally	3.8	3.8	3.9
Your child's ability in Language generally	3.9	3.9	3.9

Table Parents5c The level of changed noticed to their child's schooling (mean scores by type of school)

	Primary	District High	Other
Your child's interest in Reading	4.0	3.7	4.5
Your child's ability in Reading	4.1	4.0	4.1
Your child's interest in Writing	3.9	3.6	4.4
Your child's ability in Writing	4.0	4.1	4.2
Your child's interest in Oral Language	3.7	3.7	3.9
Your child's ability in Oral Language	3.6	3.8	3.8
Your child's interest in Spelling	3.8	3.8	4.4
Your child's ability in Spelling	3.9	3.9	4.2
Your child's interest in Language generally	3.8	3.8	4.2
Your child's ability in Language generally	3.9	4.0	4.1

Table Parents5d The level of changed noticed to their child's schooling (mean scores by Attendance at Parent Information Session)

	Attended Parent Information Session			
	No	Do not remember	Yes, one	Yes, several
Your child's interest in Reading	3.9	4.3	4.1	4.1
Your child's ability in Reading	4.0	4.4	4.1	4.3
Your child's interest in Writing	3.9	3.6	3.9	3.9
Your child's ability in Writing	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Your child's interest in Oral Language	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.7
Your child's ability in Oral Language	3.6	3.9	3.7	3.8
Your child's interest in Spelling	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8
Your child's ability in Spelling	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.9
Your child's interest in Language generally	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.9
Your child's ability in Language generally	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.0

Table Parents6 Changes that have occurred

Reading		No.
	Comment	
1	Keen to read, keen to discuss	348
2	Exploring wider variety , different genres	215
3	Enjoying being read to	108
4	Reading aloud more fluently	46
5	No or little change	25
6	Childtren still need encouragement to read	22
7	Disappointed with reading standards achieved	15

Writing		No.
	Comment	
1	Keen to write and discuss writing	166
2	Willing to experiment with a variety of genres	84
3	Improved neatness and style	42
4	Improved	40
5	Not keen, writes as little as possible	27
6	No or little change	24
7	Struggles, needs guidelines	6

Spelling		No.
	Comment	
1	Interested, wishes to be accurate	222
2	Corrects others and own spelling	41
3	No or little change	29
4	Little interest, hesitant about spelling	19
5	Work given is too difficult	8
6	List words correct, general spelling often incorrect	4

Oral Language		No.
	Comment	
1	Increased confidence, willingness to experiment	109
2	Oral language at a good standard	91
3	Increased vocabulary	46
4	No or little change	43
5	Interest levels improving	24
6	Decreased confidence, shy	12

Language generally		No.
	Comment	
1	General improvement	145
2	Increased confidence	51
3	Moderate improvement, it was good anyway	33
4	No improvement, it was generally OK anyway	20
5	Not experimenting with language, takes few risks	6
6	Needs guidelines and correction	2
7	Not using language correctly, increased slang, decreased care	2

Table Parents7a The effects of First Steps on their child's schooling

	Major negative changes	Moderate negative changes	No change	Moderate positive changes	Major positive changes	Mean
Your ability to help your child in Language areas	.3	.6	32.7	52.6	13.5	3.8
Your understanding of the school's Language program	.3	2.0	27.1	50.3	20.3	3.9
Your feelings about how language is taught in the school	.3	2.3	23.3	44.3	29.4	4.0
Your understanding of how the school reports on Language areas	.3	2.6	26.0	49.7	21.4	3.9
Your understanding of how children develop Language		2.0	27.7	46.6	23.8	3.9

Table Parents7b The effects of First Steps on their child's schooling (mean scores by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote
Your ability to help your child in Language areas	3.8	3.8	4.0
Your understanding of the school's Language program	3.9	3.8	4.1
Your feelings about how language is taught in the school	3.9	4.0	4.2
Your understanding of how the school reports on Language areas	3.8	4.0	4.1
Your understanding of how children develop Language	3.9	3.9	4.2

Table Parents7c The effects of First Steps on their child's schooling (mean scores by type of school)

	Primary	District High	Other
Your ability to help your child in Language areas	3.8	3.8	4.0
Your understanding of the school's Language program	3.9	3.9	4.6
Your feelings about how language is taught in the school	4.0	4.0	4.3
Your understanding of how the school reports on Language areas	3.9	3.8	4.0
Your understanding of how children develop Language	3.9	4.0	4.4

Table Parents8 Other comments

	Comment	No.
1	Positive - a very worthwhile project	67
2	Child's self esteem increased	38
3	Need more information/workshops, post newsletters directly to parents	31
4	Can't tell if changes in my child are due to First Steps or growing older	27
5	The resources are the key. The real resources are the teavhers and parents who support it	16
6	Children can develop at their own rate	14
7	Don't know much about First Steps	14
8	No change in my child	9
9	Reporting/feedback useful and informstive	9
10	First Steps does not cover the basics and is not geared to low achievers	8
11	Teachers absent from the classroom too often	7
12	First Steps identifies the weaknesses and teachers can act accordingly	5
13	Children do not get enough guidelines/expectations and are not motivated to achieve	4
14	Reports do not give parents a clear idea of child's ability or achievement	3
15	Needs to be conntinuity of assessment between classes, years and schools	2
16	First Steps has not been a benifit to my child	2
17	School work needs to be corrected on the spot, not after the child has forgotten he did it	1

Appendix 3

Responses from Teachers

PART A PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

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Table Te3a	Length of time at that school
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PART D EFFECTS ON THE SCHOOL

Table Te15	The effect of First Steps on the school as a whole
Table Te16	How teachers feel about First Steps

Appendix 3 Responses from Teachers

PART A PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table Te1 Type of school

Type of School	Metro	Country	Remote	Total
Primary	200	112	6	318
District High	5	28	7	30
Other	1	1	3	5
Total	206	141	16	353

Table Te2 Size of school

Size of School	Metro	Country	Remote
100 or less students	3	14	4
101 - 300 students	62	43	3
301 - 700 students	103	58	5
701 or more students	34	26	3

Table Te3a Length of time at that school

Time at this school	Metro	Country	Remote
my first year	46	39	7
1 to 3 years	52	56	8
4 to 6 years	63	28	1
7 to 10 years	20	12	
more than 10 years	25	6	

Table Te3b Teaching experience

Teaching Experience	Metro	Country	Remote
my first year		6	1
1 to 3 years	3	24	7
4 to 6 years	24	38	2
7 to 10 years	37	20	3
more than 10 years	142	53	3

Table Te4a Type of involvement with First Steps (by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote
Core school	40	38	4
Cell school	86	72	8
Associate school	65	16	
PSP school	47	56	4
ELAN school	8	24	2
PCAP school	1	20	5
Remote Country school		1	7

Table Te4b Type of involvement with First Steps (by type of school)

	Primary	District High	Other
Core school	71	11	1
Cell school	145	18	3
Associate school	75	6	
PSP school	90	15	2
ELAN school	27	5	2
PCAP school	16	9	1
Remote Country school	3	4	2

Table Te4c Level of teaching (by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote
K	14	14	3
Year 1	36	37	7
Year 2	41	42	7
Year 3	44	34	7
Year 4	42	336	5
Year 5	43	33	5
Year 6	38	35	5
Year 7	32	31	5
Other		9	3

Table Te4d Level of teaching (by type of school)

	Primary	District High	Other
K	26	3	2
Year 1	70	8	2
Year 2	78	10	3
Year 3	73	11	1
Year 4	71	11	1
Year 5	73	7	1
Year 6	68	9	1
Year 7	59	8	1
Other	8	2	2

Table Te5 Stage of implementation of First Steps (by year of commencement)

Implementation	Year commenced on First Steps			Total
	1989-1990	1991-1992	1993-1994	
K only		1	1	2
K to 3 only	5	7	6	18
K to 7	69	133	62	264
Year 4 and 5 only		2		2
Year 6 and 7 only		2		2
Other	8	15	9	32

PART B - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Table Te6a Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes

	of no value	not very valuable	quite valuable	very valuable	outstandingly valuable	Mean
Spelling	.3	10.4	39.1	41.8	8.48	3.5
Writing	.3	5.3	29.9	50.6	13.9	3.7
Reading	.6	8.4	38.3	43.5	9.1	3.5
Oral Language	.7	10.3	46.4	35.7	6.9	3.4
Linking Day	6.2	24.8	40.3	20.2	8.5	3.0

Table Te6b Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes (mean scores by Year level)

	K	3	5	7
Spelling	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.4
Writing	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9
Reading	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.5
Oral Language	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.3
Linking Day	3.1	3.3	3.2	2.8

Table Te6c Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes (mean scores by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote	Primary	D High	Other
Spelling	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.5	3.6	3.5
Writing	3.6	3.8	4.1	3.7	3.9	3.7
Reading	3.5	3.66	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.3
Oral Language	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.3
Linking Day	2.9	3.1	3.8	2.9	3.6	2.0

Table Te6d Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes (mean scores by year of commencement)

	1989-1990	1991-1992	1993-1994
Spelling	3.6	3.4	3.4
Writing	3.9	3.7	3.5
Reading	3.7	3.5	3.4
Oral Language	3.5	3.4	3.3
Linking Day	3.2	2.8	3.0

Table Te6e Why teachers gave these ratings to the First Steps professional development programmes

	Comment	No.
1	If we had just being given the literature it may not be read and therefore used.	67
2	Writing has become a priority.	38
3	Practical information on use of activities most valuable. Easy to implement,	31
4	Spelling programme activities most beneficial.	16
5	the programmes motivated and clarified the use of FS.	14
6	Some repetition.	14
7	It depended upon the credibility of the presenters.	9
8	Reading - great strategies.	9
9	Inadequate time given to absorb and implement the whole process.	8
10	Despite problems/workload FS useful and meaningful.	7
11	Well organised and presented.	4
12	Consolidates and revises what has already been learnt.	3
13	Writing/reading helps identify children "at risk".	5
14	Continuum presents new approach to planning and recording.	2
15	Reading continuum needs refinement.	2
16	Writing well structured with practical classroom orientation.	1
17	Oral language component good.	1

Table Te6f Ratings of aspects of the First Steps model in terms of their impact on the implementation of First Steps

	not had	of no value	not very valuable	quite valuable	very valuable	outstandingly valuable	Mean
Collaborative teachers	65.9	7.3	12.9	36.3	32.3	11.3	3.3
Focus A Teachers - to arrange In-class support	29.7	11.7	13.7	35.2	30.5	9.0	3.1
Focus A Teachers - to provide Model lessons	42.9	14.4	18.3	32.7	25.0	9.6	3.0
Focus A Teachers - as a source of advice	15.7	4.2	9.4	36.2	35.2	15.0	3.5
The First Steps School Development Officers	26.3	6.0	16.4	39.9	31.3	6.3	3.2
ELAN teacher	85.7		11.5	30.8	40.4	17.3	3.6
Professional Development courses	12.6	.9	7.5	35.2	44.0	12.3	3.6

PART C - EFFECTS ON TEACHING

Table Te7a The impact First Steps has had on teaching

	No change	Very little change	Moderate amount of change	A considerable degree of change	Major change	Mean
School development planning	3.7	13.8	32.2	38.2	12.1	3.4
Language policies	4.5	14.2	33.4	37.1	10.8	3.4
Language programs	2.2	11.8	33.1	39.0	13.8	3.5
Teaching methods	2.0	13.0	39.0	35.3	10.7	3.4
Monitoring using the continua	4.0	11.7	26.5	33.9	23.9	3.6
Reporting to parents	11.7	28.7	31.8	21.8	6.0	2.8
Working with students "at risk"	4.0	16.2	43.1	28.3	8.4	3.2

Table Te7b The impact First Steps has had on teaching (mean scores by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote	Primary	District High	Other
School development planning	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.4	4.0
Language policies	3.2	3.5	3.8	3.3	3.4	4.0
Language programs	3.4	3.6	4.0	3.5	3.5	3.8
Teaching methods	3.2	3.6	3.9	3.4	3.5	3.8
Monitoring using the continua	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.6	4.3
Reporting to parents	2.7	2.8	3.7	2.8	3.1	2.8
Working with students "at risk"	3.2	3.2	3.6	3.2	3.2	3.3

Table Te7c The impact First Steps has had on teaching (mean scores by special characteristics)

	PSP	ELAN	PCAP
School development planning	3.5	3.7	3.6
Language policies	3.5	3.6	3.9
Language programs	3.7	3.8	4.0
Teaching methods	3.5	3.8	3.9
Monitoring using the continua	3.8	4.0	4.1
Reporting to parents	3.0	3.2	3.2
Working with students "at risk"	3.3	3.5	3.6

Table Te8.

Changes that have occurred as a result of First Steps

a) With regard to the teaching of Spelling

	Comment	No.
1	Individual spelling journals.	87
2	Have implemented 'have-a-go' pads.	45
3	Content is far more pupil centred and therefore pupil relevant - individualised.	27
4	Implemented 'suitable' activities/strategies.	20
5	Greater understanding of the continua and strategies to monitor progress.	18
6	More in context.	12
7	More directed at teaching children in specific areas of weakness.	11
8	More variety and more activity based.	9
9	Use of the continua.	5
10	Great strategies.	5
11	Gives more direction in programming.	5
12	Whole language approach.	5
13	Have already been using many of the methods.	5
14	Lots of extension available.	4
15	Assessment through all written work.	3
16	Much harder words being tried as a result of spelling strategies.	3
17	Beginning to teach the alphabet in formal sessions.	3
18	Very happy with children's attitudes and results.	2
19	Now teaching spelling rules through discovery.	2
20	Partner testing.	2
21	No change	2

b) With regard to the teaching of Writing

	Comment	No.
1	Introduction of different forms of writing, i.e. report writing, narrative, exposition etc. helps them focus on writing.	74
2	More structure/modelling in the teaching of writing.	50
3	Frameworks worthwhile/useful.	32
4	Emphasis shifted to informational texts.	15
5	Editing and proof reading skills taught.	13
6	Implement daily writing.	11
7	Can refer to particular stages, DC and appropriate strategies to move children from phase to phase.	11
8	Focussing on thematic/integrated approaches.	11
9	Good teachers have been using these strategies for years.	10
10	Integration throughout the curriculum.	10
11	Content better organised, has greater definition and more sequential in its development.	9
12	More conferencing with students/problem solving.	9
13	Use of continua.	8
14	More variety in activities.	7
15	Student outcomes superior as a result of better organization.	7
16	More encouragement to 'have-a-go' - take risks.	7
17	Only just implementing - still unsettled but hope to improve in the future.	5
18	Focus on grammar aspects of writing.	5
19	Now there is more continuity between teachers and year levels.	4
20	More emphasis on the various areas rather than concentrated effort in merely one or two.	4
21	No change	0

c) With regard to the teaching of Reading

	Comment	No.
1	Using a wide range of First Steps ideas and strategies	35
2	Use of big books/shared books.	31
3	Whole language approach across curriculum.	29
4	Was already doing some of the strategies.	28
5	Use DC to identify phases of children. especially "at risk".	25
6	Like strategies such as using <i>before, during and after</i> method.	21
7	Reading for meaning strategies, text innovations.	19
8	Less basals are now used.	11
9	Listed ideas are great to focus planning on.	9
10	More exposure to different forms to read and enjoy.	7
11	Assessments have become more specific to skills in the continua.	7
12	Less emphasis on formal comprehension type activities.	7
13	More confidence to let children run with their own personal development.	6
14	Integrated language, literature, social studies programme.	6
15	Reassurance on the right track - more confidence.	6
16	Has tended to be more thematic.	5
17	Extension catered for.	5
18	Not keen on the continua.	5
19	Remediation is automatic.	4
20	Confusion between known methods and FS organization.	4
21	Do not think it caters for children with specific learning difficulties.	3
22	No change	0

d) With regard to the teaching of Oral Language

	Comment	No.
1	More importance attached to oral language.	56
2	More organised news sessions - 'who, what, when, where, why'.	29
3	New ideas - greater variety.	28
4	Integrated discussion etc. using manager/ recorder/ encourager/ reporter.	21
5	Barrier games very effective.	19
6	Only small amount but making progress. More time needed to implement.	19
7	Very little change.	17
8	Value of role play.	16
9	Linking oral language to written.	16
10	Teaching oral language has become more formalized - planned activities.	14
11	More small group activities.	13
12	Most changes here as several PD days attended.	13
13	Gives areas of oral language to concentrate on - social convention, literacy/language etc.	12
14	Use continua to identify where children are at and how to move them on.	12
15	Only use in evaluation.	11
16	Changes in monitoring.	8
17	Have used programme for several years.	6
18	Found spot checks and rating scales extremely useful in giving direction to children.	5
19	Not too time consuming to carry out - excellent.	5
20	No change	0

e) In terms of supporting students at risk, or those with learning difficulties.

	Comment	No.
1	Using information in continua enables us to plan lessons directed at individual children's needs.	67
2	Using specific strategies to help children 'at risk'.	58
3	Has helped in pin-pointing children's problem areas.	45
4	Have added FS ideas into programme.	31
5	Whole class activities that focus on 'at risk' children provide consolidation and revision for others.	28
6	Performance indicators a positive reinforcement to assist teachers and their teaching.	17
7	Close monitoring of small amounts of progress.	12
8	Easy find strategies for heterogenous groups.	10
9	Spelling as guideline for activities.	8
10	Was already using these strategies.	4
11	Provided frameworks.	4
12	Less threatening for the children.	4
13	More coordinated effort throughout school.	3
14	Great for extension.	3
15	Does not cater enough for students at risk/SLD.	3
16	Helps more able students.	2
17	Generally teachers not using the reading difficulties model.	2
18	Can use information to help parents help children.	1
19	Continue to use 'tried and true' methods.	1
20	School resources can only be spread so far. It takes a lot of time.	1
21	Concerned that junior teachers place too much emphasis on developmental aspects and fail to identify hidden reasons for non-achievement.	1
22	No change	0

f) In terms of how it has affected classroom organisation.

	Comment	No.
1	Whole language environment/programming.	39
2	Most subjects not affected.	9
3	Added to the variety of strategies.	27
4	Little change as already doing most.	21
5	More individualised/flexible way of learning, teaching and accepting children.	16
6	More relaxed atmosphere.	15
7	Independent learning occurs more frequently.	15
8	Have increased reading/writing centres to allow for learning variation between class.	13
9	More activity by children.	11
10	Classroom teaching more organized.	12
11	In some areas solid links throughout the curriculum areas.	12
12	Can be more specific about what strategies/outcomes I want to use/achieve.	10
13	Better utilization of support.	8
14	Daily writing programme.	8
15	Spelling where journal work and activities have replaced My Word Book.	7
16	Some strategies/activities have been quite time consuming to implement.	7
17	We are able to 'run' with items of high interest.	5
18	Have had to learn to slow down and not try to do too much - gives children time to acquire skills.	5
19	Dramatic change.	5
20	Has made it easier.	4
21	Disorganized.	4
22	No change	0

g) In terms of assessment.

	Comment	No.
1	Using developmental continua in assessment.	56
2	Has enabled me to be more accurate, more defined.	40
3	Using information to plan future teaching for the classroom.	36
4	Combining a variety of sources (continua, anecdotal and more traditional to get broader view).	27
5	Achievement is individualized.	21
6	Assessment on-going.	20
7	Assessment using continua makes reporting to parents easier.	18
8	Feel assessment sheets suitable for small minority of children only.	16
9	Confusion as one tends to use both old methods and FS resulting in extra workload.	15
10	Use of writing continua established.	14
11	More work samples used.	12
12	Need to review and reorganize assessment.	10
13	Only Children 'at risk' assessed on the continua.	10
14	Uniform assessment through whole school.	10
15	Assessment takes longer.	9
16	Too much work to do all the class.	9
17	Has assisted and given parents self help strategies to continue work at home (parents' pack).	8
18	Observational assessment.	8
19	Some assessment forms used.	8
20	Encourage teachers to use each other's continua.	8
21	No change	0

Table Te9a Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented

	Not had yet	Not started	Just beginning	Well under way	Established	Mean
Spelling	8.5	2.4	21.9	34.7	40.7	3.1
Writing	7.4	.3	13.9	34.6	50.9	3.4
Reading	13.7	8.0	27.4	31.2	33.4	2.9
Oral Language	19.7	3.7	38.0	27.1	21.2	2.6

Table Te9b Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented
(mean scores by type of school)

	Primary	D High	Other
Spelling	3.1	3.3	3.0
Writing	3.4	3.5	3.3
Reading	2.9	2.9	2.0
Oral Language	2.6	2.6	2.5

Table Te9c Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented
(mean scores by size of school)

	100 or less students	101 - 500 students	501 - 1000 students	1001 or more students
Spelling	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.2
Writing	3.8	3.4	3.3	3.4
Reading	3.2	2.7	2.9	3.1
Oral Language	2.4	2.4	2.7	2.7

Table Te9d Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented
(mean scores by time at the school)

	my first year	1 to 3 years	4 to 6 years	7 to 10 years	more than 10 years
Spelling	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.1
Writing	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.2
Reading	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.8
Oral Language	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.4

Table Te9e Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented
(mean scores by special characteristics)

	PSP	ELAN	PCAP	Remote
Spelling	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1
Writing	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.6
Reading	3.1	3.2	2.8	2.3
Oral Language	2.6	2.9	2.4	2.9

Table Te9f Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented
(mean scores by teaching experience)

	my first year	1 to 3 years	4 to 6 years	7 to 10 years	more than 10 years
Spelling	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.2
Writing	3.7	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.3
Reading	3.3	2.9	2.8	3.0	2.9
Oral Language	2.9	2.8	2.5	2.7	2.5

PART D EFFECTS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Table Te10a Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning

	Much less progress with student learning	Less progress with student learning	No noticeable effect	Some assistance with student learning	Major assistance with student learning	Mean
Students' total language development	.3		17.1	62.0	20.6	4.0
Spelling	.9	.6	19.6	57.5	21.2	4.0
Writing	.6	.3	12.0	55.6	31.5	4.2
Reading	.7	.7	27.0	53.9	17.7	3.9
Oral Language	1.6	1.9	29.2	55.6	11.7	3.7

Table Te10b Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by type of school)

	Primary	D High	Other
Students' total language development	4.0	4.2	4.0
Spelling	4.0	4.1	4.0
Writing	4.2	4.2	4.0
Reading	3.9	3.9	3.7
Oral Language	3.7	3.8	4.0

Table Te10c Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by size of school)

	100 or less students	101 - 500 students	501 - 1000 students	1001 or more students
Students' total language development	4.2	4.0	4.0	4.1
Spelling	4.1	3.9	4.0	3.9
Writing	4.5	4.1	4.2	4.1
Reading	4.2	3.8	3.9	3.9
Oral Language	3.7	3.6	3.9	3.7

Table Te10d Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by time at the school)

	my first year	1 to 3 years	4 to 6 years	7 to 10 years	more than 10 years
Students' total language development	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0	3.8
Spelling	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.7
Writing	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	3.9
Reading	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.8
Oral Language	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.7

Table Te10e Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by Special programs)

	PSP	ELAN	PCAP	Remote
Students' total language development	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.3
Spelling	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.1
Writing	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3
Reading	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.0
Oral Language	3.8	4.0	3.8	4.0

Table Te10f Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by teaching experience)

	my first year	1 to 3 years	4 to 6 years	7 to 10 years	more than 10 years
Students' total language development	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.1	3.9
Spelling	3.7	4.2	4.0	4.1	3.9
Writing	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.1
Reading	4.2	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.8
Oral Language	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.9	3.7

Table Te10g Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by location)

	Metro	County	Remote
Students' total language development	3.9	4.1	4.1
Spelling	3.9	4.1	4.2
Writing	4.1	4.3	4.2
Reading	3.8	3.9	3.9
Oral Language	3.7	3.7	4.0

Table Te11 Changes to students' attitudes to learning that have occurred as a result of First Steps.

	Comment	No.
1	Students enthusiastic about language and reading programmes. Improved attitudes.	34
2	Spelling programmes relevant to their work and writing - students respond positively.	31
3	Whole language approach linking all activities.	29
4	Students less teacher dependent - more independent.	28
5	Children able to work at own levels - less frustration.	26
6	Students more willing to 'have-a-go' - take risks.	24
7	Students encouraged to learn from their mistakes.	21
8	No dramatic improvement as strategies already in place.	20
9	Strategies great for teaching informational skills.	20
10	Attitude to oral language has changed/improved.	19
11	Writing frameworks and strategies produce positive results.	19
12	Change in attitudes may not be solely due to FS but also introduction of full time school for 5 year olds.	17
13	Freer activities - more relaxed atmosphere.	8
14	Maybe children 'at risk' develop more confidence with coping with activities given.	7
15	Not noticeable as very little has been done using FS.	7
16	PSP school and have had major literacy project in place to foster positive learning attitudes.	4
17	Proof of long term benefits of FS will be the comparison with children who have not participated in S.	3
18	Difficult to assess as have been doing the suggested strategies for many years.	3

Table Te12 Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student student attitude to and confidence in each aspect of language

	Not covered	Much less positive	Less positive	No effect	More positive	Much more positive	Mean
Students' total language development	13.8		3	27.1	61.8	10.8	3.8
Spelling	12.4		3	27.0	58.9	13.8	3.9
Writing	10.4			20.9	61.3	17.8	4.0
Reading	20.6		1.0	34.3	56.4	8.3	3.7
Oral Language	31.1	.4	.8	39.8	47.8	11.2	3.7

Table Te13 Examples where First Steps has helped individual students.

	Comment	No.
1	More able students can advance at own pace on individual programmes.	31
2	Language and reading programme develops positive attitudes.	30
3	Where success is not a right or wrong answer encourages those at risk to 'have-a-go' and become more confident.	27
4	Spelling activities/strategies have been particularly useful in less able students.	23
5	Child able to present a written piece in a logical sequence thanks to frameworks and strategies.	21
6	Child not willing to talk in large class group eventually gained confidence using strategies such as 'what, where, when	19
7	Individual group work now carried out more willingly.	15
8	It has been useful to show concerned parents what a child can do on a continuum.	11
9	Continuum focuses on positive results.	9
10	Continuum has helped identify specific areas of concern.	9
11	Spelling journals cater for all students, 'at risk' to very bright.	8
12	Word banks have helped 'very beginning writer' to use strategies eg. phase matching on ABC to consolidate skills.	6
13	Class charts identifying spelling strategies have helped individuals.	5
14	Less able students not helped at all.	5
15	Programme has shown the importance of slowing down for weaker children.	5
16	FS has helped almost all children both 'at risk' and those developing normally.	4
17	Selection of appropriate and stimulating strategies.	4
18	Use only as a strategy and structure to teach SOS.	2
19	Under achievers feel less segregated as working at own level.	2
20	With the emphasis on oral language the transference to writing is amazing.	2

Table Te14 Ratings the impact of First Steps on students' use of the following strategies

	Not covered	No change	Very little change	Moderate amount of change	Considerable degree of change	Major change	Mean
Reading							
Meaning making strategies	38.6	4.6	16.9	52.3	23.5	2.7	3.0
Word identification strategies	27.7	4.2	19.0	46.0	28.5	2.3	3.1
Problem solving strategies	28.5	4.2	20.0	48.5	25.4	1.9	3.0
Writing							
Planning strategies	15.3	2.6	2.3	36.4	37.4	11.4	3.4
Editing strategies	17.3	3.3	17.3	44.2	26.2	9.0	3.2
Text structures	17.0	2.3	10.6	32.1	38.4	16.6	3.6
Overall writing strategies	14.3	2.6	10.6	35.9	39.4	11.5	3.5
Spelling							
Spelling strategies	16.8	2.3	11.9	42.9	34.7	8.3	3.3
Spelling journal	26.1	5.6	15.2	27.5	34.2	17.5	3.4

Table Te15 The effect of First Steps on the school as a whole

	Comment	No.
1	Staff supportive.	28
2	Allows teachers to get clearer understanding of where children are at form continuas/learning development.	27
3	There is added stress and confusion in some teachers as more work involved.	25
4	Positive "buzz" as teachers implement all strategies.	25
5	More effective environment and more effective learning.	23
6	Does nothing for those that ignore change.	21
7	Consolidates what some teachers already know.	20
8	Many teachers do not know how to use FS continua for further planning.	19
9	Not a great deal.	18
10	Better grasp of what whole school is doing.	18
11	Communication between staff more effective as criteria clearly identified at each level. A focus for evaluation planning and school development.	12
12	Staff do not have time to discuss FS processes and how it is progressing or for consolidation and revision.	6
13	Uniformity with teaching strategies and evaluation.	6
14	Able to look at specific areas of need that need to be covered.	6
15	School reporting has changed/ under review.	5
16	FS continua has provided information for MIS.	5
17	Placing children on continua takes a long time.	5
18	Use in school development planning.	3
19	School divided into those that have embraced FS and those that either ignore change or resent having it imposed upon them.	2
20	Use of Continua has made for uniform assessment to a degree.	1
21	Children benefit greatly.	2

Table Te16 How teachers feel about First Steps

	Comments	No.
1	Positive attitude towards philosophy, ideas and strategies.	57
2	No evidence that it helps less able students.	26
3	Teaching has improved as a result of FS.	19
4	Generally more time needed.	21
5	Increases workload but worthwhile.	21
6	Very positive response. Excellent, fantastic, etc.	21
7	Impossible to take on all subject areas at once.	19
8	Not all strategies/activities are new.	19
9	The programme in-servicing has improved greatly since beginning.	12
10	DC helpful in evaluation.	12
11	Unfortunate that FS has been sold to private corp as many teachers will not benefit due to cost involved.	11
12	Funding must be maintained to ensure continuation of FS as a resource for teachers.	9
13	Has given confidence in planning whole language approach.	9
14	Too much emphasis place on continua.	9
15	Continua valuable indicators to child development.	7
16	Very difficult aspect will be the use of the new Longman Cheshire books as many teachers inserviced in Education Department books and plotting is done on these.	7
17	Not sure about continua - inconsistencies.	5
18	Needs to start in Grade 1 and be sequential.	5
19	Great programme if data gathered is used correctly.	5
20	Some teachers have found it valuable to use direct instruction on less able students.	5
21	The general package is good as a 'guide' to teaching. Feel qualified to use aspects that I agree and feel comfortable with.	4
22	Parent pack good idea as it gives parents examples of what children might be doing and helpful hints to move children on.	4
23	We need to be aware that although learning is development there are other reasons for non-achievement	3
24	Is it being covered at University and colleges.	3
25	Does not give Aboriginal ESL students necessary skills.	3

Appendix 4

Responses from Focus Teachers

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PART A PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table FT1 Type of school

Type of School	Metro	Country	Remote	Total
Primary	47	32	1	80
District High	2	7	1	10
Other		2	1	3
Total	49	41	3	93

Table FT2 Size of school

Size of School	Metro	Country	Remote
100 or less students	2	10	
101 - 300 students	15	14	
301 - 700 students	21	14	2
701 or more students	11	2	1

Table FT3a Length of time at that school

Time at this school	Metro	Country	Remote
my first year	3	9	
1 to 3 years	12	17	1
4 to 6 years	17	8	1
7 to 10 years	9	5	
more than 10 years	8	2	1

Table FT3b Teaching experience

Teaching Experience	Metro	Country	Remote
my first year			
1 to 3 years		3	
4 to 6 years	3	6	1
7 to 10 years	4	13	
more than 10 years	42	19	2

Table FT4a Type of involvement with First Steps (by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote
Core school	14	9	1
Cell school	16	23	2
Associate school	18	7	
PSP school	13	17	
ELAN school	2	8	
PCAP school	1	9	2
Remote Country school			1

Table FT4b Type of involvement with First Steps (by type of school)

	Primary	District High	Other
Core school	20	3	1
Cell school	33	6	2
Associate school	24	1	
PSP school	23	5	2
ELAN school	7	2	1
PCAP school	9	3	
Remote Country school			1

Table FT4c Level of teaching (by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote
K	2	7	2
Year 1	15	13	1
Year 2	18	14	1
Year 3	10	14	
Year 4	7	16	
Year 5	5	12	
Year 6	3	13	1
Year 7	4	10	1
Other	4	3	

Table FT4d Level of teaching (by type of school)

	Primary	District High	Other
K	9	1	1
Year 1	22	4	
Year 2	31	2	
Year 3	23		1
Year 4	21	2	
Year 5	14	3	
Year 6	13	3	1
Year 7	12	2	1
Other	7		

Table FT5 Stage of implementation of First Steps (by year of commencement - percentages)

Implementation	Year commenced on First Steps			Total
	1989-1990	1991-1992	1993-1994	
K only				
K to 3 only	8.3	2.4	8.0	5.6
K to 7	66.7	85.4	72.0	76.7
Year 4 and 5 only				
Year 6 and 7 only				
Other	25.0	12.2	20.0	16.0

PART B - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Table FT6a Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes

	of no value	not very valuable	quite valuable	very valuable	outstandingly valuable	Mean
Spelling		1.1	15.6	51.1	32.2	4.1
Writing		2.2	12.2	48.9	36.7	4.2
Reading		1.1	22.7	51.1	25.0	4.0
Oral Language		3.6	31.0	40.5	25.0	3.9
Linking Day	1.8	10.7	39.3	32.1	16.1	3.5

Table FT6b Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes (mean scores by Year level)

	K	3	5	7
Spelling	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.1
Writing	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.3
Reading	4.3	3.9	4.1	3.7
Oral Language	4.4	3.7	3.8	3.4
Linking Day	3.5	3.3	3.7	3.3

Table FT6c Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes (mean scores by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote	Primary	D High	Other
Spelling	4.1	4.3	3.3	4.1	4.4	4.0
Writing	4.2	4.3	3.3	4.2	4.4	4.0
Reading	3.8	4.2	3.3	4.0	4.3	3.7
Oral Language	3.9	3.8	3.0	3.9	3.8	3.7
Linking Day	3.4	3.7	1.0	3.4	4.0	

Table FT6d Ratings of the First Steps professional development programmes (mean scores by year of commencement)

	1989-1990	1991-1992	1993-1994
Spelling	4.0	4.1	4.2
Writing	4.2	4.2	4.1
Reading	4.1	4.0	4.0
Oral Language	3.9	3.8	3.9
Linking Day	3.5	3.4	3.8

Table FT6e Why teachers gave these ratings to the First Steps professional development programmes

	Comment	No.
1	Practical information on use of activities most valuable. Easy to implement.	45
2	The programmes motivated and clarified the use of FS.	28
3	Well organised and presented.	22
4	Writing well structured with practical classroom orientation.	14
5	Spelling programme activities most beneficial.	10
6	It depended upon the credibility of the presenters.	9
7	Consolidates and revises what has already been learnt.	9
8	Inadequate time given to absorb and implement the whole process.	8
9	Some repetition.	6
10	Linking day excellent.	5
11	Oral language component good.	5
12	Writing/reading helps identify children "at risk".	4
13	Continuum presents new approach to planning and recording.	4
14	Reading - great strategies.	4
15	Despite problems/workload FS useful and meaningful.	3
16	Writing has become a priority.	3
17	Linking day not as fulfilling as other PD days.	3
18	Reading continuum needs refinement.	2
19	Oral language continua takes too long to implement.	2
20	Possibility that just being given the literature it may not be read and therefore used.	1
21	More beneficial if done with Collaborative Teacher.	1
22	Too many days travelling, attending and away from class.	1

Table FT6f Ratings of aspects of the First Steps model in terms of their impact on the implementation of First Steps

	not had	of no value	not very valuable	quite valuable	very valuable	outstandingly valuable	Mean
Collaborative teachers	72.0	3.8	3.8	38.5	30.8	23.1	3.7
Focus A Teachers - to arrange In-class support	14.0	6.3	10.0	40.0	37.5	6.3	3.3
Focus A Teachers - to provide Model lessons	31.2	9.4	26.6	40.6	21.9	1.6	2.8
Focus A Teachers - as a source of advice	8.6		5.9	34.1	52.9	7.1	3.6
The First Steps School Development Officers	7.6	2.3	7.0	29.1	46.5	15.1	3.7
ELAN teacher	87.1		8.3	33.3	41.7	16.7	3.7
Professional Development courses	6.5		3.4	20.7	51.7	24.1	4.0

PART C - EFFECTS ON TEACHING

Table FT7a The impact First Steps has had on teaching

	No change	Very little change	Moderate amount of change	A considerable degree of change	Major change	Mean
School development planning	1.1	6.6	36.3	44.0	12.1	3.6
Language policies	1.1	9.9	26.4	49.5	13.2	3.6
Language programs		8.7	28.3	45.7	17.4	3.7
Teaching methods	1.1	5.5	39.6	37.4	16.5	3.6
Monitoring using the continua	2.2	3.3	18.7	44.0	31.9	4.0
Reporting to parents	5.6	17.8	31.1	34.4	11.1	3.3
Working with students "at risk"	1.1	12.1	35.2	38.5	13.2	3.5

Table FT7b The impact First Steps has had on teaching (mean scores by location)

	Metro	Country	Remote	Primary	istrict High	Other
School development planning	3.4	3.8	3.3	3.6	3.7	3.7
Language policies	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7
Language programs	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.7
Teaching methods	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7
Monitoring using the continua	3.9	4.2	3.3	3.9	4.3	4.7
Reporting to parents	3.1	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.3
Working with students "at risk"	3.4	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.4	4.3

Table FT7c The impact First Steps has had on teaching (mean scores by special characteristics)

	PSP	ELAN	PCAP
School development planning	3.7	3.9	3.7
Language policies	3.7	4.0	3.6
Language programs	3.9	4.4	3.6
Teaching methods	3.9	4.2	3.8
Monitoring using the continua	4.2	4.4	3.9
Reporting to parents	3.2	3.8	3.4
Working with students "at risk"	3.7	4.0	3.7

Table FT8. Changes that have occurred as a result of First Steps

a) With regard to the teaching of Spelling

	Comment	No.
1	Individual spelling journals.	50
2	Have implemented 'have-a-go' pads.	23
3	Content is far more pupil centred and therefore pupil relevant - individualised.	21
4	Implemented 'suitable' activities/strategies.	14
5	Greater understanding of the continua and strategies to monitor progress.	10
6	More in context.	9
7	More directed at teaching children in specific areas of weakness.	6
8	More variety and more activity based.	4
9	Use of the continua.	3
10	Great strategies.	3
11	Gives more direction in programming.	3
12	Whole language approach.	3
13	Have already been using many of the methods.	3
14	Lots of extension available.	2
15	Assessment through all written work.	2
16	Much harder words being tried as a result of spelling strategies.	2
17	Beginning to teach the alphabet in formal sessions.	2
18	Very happy with children's attitudes and results.	1
19	Now teaching spelling rules through discovery.	1
20	Partner testing.	1
21	No change	0

b) With regard to the teaching of Writing

	Comment	No.
1	Introduction of different forms of writing, i.e. report writing, narrative, exposition etc. helps them focus on writing.	45
2	More structure/modelling in the teaching of writing.	25
3	Frameworks worthwhile/useful.	15
4	Emphasis shifted to informational texts.	13
5	Editing and proof reading skills taught.	7
6	Implement daily writing.	7
7	Can refer to particular stages, DC and appropriate strategies to move children from phase to phase.	6
8	Focussing on thematic/integrated approaches.	6
9	Good teachers have been using these strategies for years.	5
10	Integration throughout the curriculum.	5
11	Content better organised, has greater definition and more sequential in its development.	5
12	More conferencing with students/problem solving.	4
13	Use of continua.	3
14	More variety in activities.	2
15	Student outcomes superior as a result of better organization.	2
16	More encouragement to 'have-a-go' - take risks.	2
17	Only just implementing - still unsettled but hope to improve in the future.	1
18	Focus on grammar aspects of writing.	1
19	Now there is more continuity between teachers and year levels.	1
20	More emphasis on the various areas rather than concentrated effort in merely one or two.	1

21	No change	0
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c) With regard to the teaching of Reading

	Comment	No.
1	Using a wide range of First Steps ideas and strategies	20
2	Use of big books/shared books.	15
3	Whole language approach across curriculum.	14
4	Was already doing some of the strategies.	10
5	Use DC to identify phases of children, especially "at risk".	9
6	Like using before, during and after method.	7
7	Reading for meaning strategies, text innovations.	7
8	Less basals are now used.	6
9	Listed ideas are great tyo focus planning on.	5
10	More exposure to different forms to tead and enjoy.	5
11	Assessments have become more specific to skills in the continua.	4
12	Less emphaiss on formal comprehension type activities.	3
13	More confidence to let children run with their own personal development.	2
14	Integrated language, literature, social studies programme.	1
15	Reassurance on the right track - more confidence.	1
16	Has tended to be more thematic.	1
17	Extension catered for.	1
18	Not keen on the continua.	1
19	Remediation is automatic.	1
20	Confusion between known methods and FS organization.	1
21	Do not think it caters for children with specific learning difficulties.	1
22	No change	0

d) With regard to the teaching of Oral Language

	Comment	No.
1	More importance attached to oral language.	28
2	More organised news sessions -'who, what, when, where, why'.	19
3	New ideas - greater variety.	12
4	Integrated discussion etc. using manager/ recorder/ encourager/ reporter.	8
5	Barrier games very effective.	7
6	Only small amount but making progress. More time needed to implement.	7
7	Very little change.	5
8	Value of role play.	5
9	Linking oral language to written.	5
10	Teaching oral language has become more formalized - planned activities.	4
11	More small group activities.	4
12	Most changes here as several PD days attended.	3
13	Gives areas of oral language to concentrate on - social convention, literacy/language etc.	3
14	Use continua to identify where children are at and how to move them on.	2
15	Only use in evaluation.	2
16	Changes in monitoring.	2
17	Have used programme for several years.	1
18	Found spot checks and rating scales extremely useful in giving direction to children.	1
19	Not too time consuming to carry out - excellent.	1
20	No change	0

e) In terms of supporting students at risk, or those with learning difficulties.

	Comment	No.
1	Using information in continua enables us to plan lessons directed at individual children's needs.	32
2	Using specific strategies to help children 'at risk'.	28
3	Has helped in pin-pointing children's problem areas.	15
4	Have added FS ideas into programme.	8
5	Whole class activities that focus on 'at risk' children provide consolidation and revision for others.	6
6	Performance indicators a positive reinforcement to assist teachers and their teaching.	5
7	Close monitoring of small amounts of progress.	3
8	Easy find strategies for heterogenous groups.	2
9	Spelling as guideline for activities.	2
10	Was already using these strategies.	2
11	Provided frameworks.	2
12	Less threatening for the children.	2
13	More coordinated effort throughout school.	2
14	Great for extension.	1
15	Does not cater enough for students at risk/SLD.	1
16	Helps more able students.	1
17	Generally teachers not using the reading difficulties model.	1
18	Can use information to help parents help children.	1
19	Continue to use 'tried and true' methods.	1
20	School resources can only be spread so far. It takes a lot of time.	1
21	Concerned that junior teachers place too much emphasis on developmental aspects and fail to identify hidden reasons for non-achievement.	1
22	No change	0

f) In terms of how it has affected classroom organisation.

	Comment	No.
1	Most subjects not affected.	13
2	Whole language environment/programming.	13
3	Added to the variety of strategies.	11
4	Little change as already doing most.	8
5	More individualised/flexible way of learning, teaching and accepting children.	7
6	More relaxed atmosphere.	7
7	Independent learning occurs more frequently.	5
8	Have increased reading/writing centres to allow for learning variation between class.	5
9	More activity by children.	5
10	Classroom teaching more organized.	4
11	In some areas solid links throughout the curriculum areas.	3
12	Can be more specific about what strategies/outcomes I want to use/achieve.	3
13	Better utilization of support.	3
14	Daily writing programme.	2
15	Spelling where journal work and activities have replaced My Word Book.	1
16	Some strategies/activities have been quite time consuming to implement.	1
17	We are able to 'run' with items of high interest.	1
18	Have had to learn to slow down and not try to do too much - gives children time to acquire skills.	1
19	Dramatic change.	1
20	Has made it easier.	1
21	Disorganized.	1
22	No change	0

g) In terms of assessment.

	Comment	No.
1	Using developmental continua in assessment.	46
2	Has enabled me to be more accurate, more defined.	12
3	Using information to plan future teaching for the classroom.	10
4	Combining a variety of sources (continua, anecdotal and more traditional to get broader view).	9
5	Achievement is individualized.	7
6	Assessment on-going.	7
7	Assessment using continua makes reporting to parents easier.	6
8	Feel assessment sheets clauable for small minority of children only.	5
9	Confusion as one tends to use both old methods and FS resulting in extra workload.	4
10	Use of writing continua established.	4
11	More work samples used.	4
12	Need to review and reorganize assessment.	3
13	Children 'at risk' assess on the continua.	3
14	Uniform assessment through whole school.	2
15	Assessment takes longer.	2
16	Too much work to do all the class.	1
17	Has assisted and given parents self help strategies to continue work at home (parents' pack).	1
18	Observational assessment.	1
19	Some assessment forms used.	1
20	Encourage teachers to use each other's continua.	1
21	No change	0

Table FT9a Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented

	Not had yet	Not started	Just beginning	Well under way	Established	Mean
Spelling	4.4		15.7	22.5	61.8	3.5
Writing	2.2	3.3	2.2	26.4	68.1	3.6
Reading	6.5	4.6	19.5	34.5	41.4	3.1
Oral Language	9.7	17.9	26.2	23.8	32.1	2.7

Table FT9b Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by type of school)

	Primary	D High	Other
Spelling	3.4	3.7	3.7
Writing	3.6	3.9	3.7
Reading	3.1	3.2	3.7
Oral Language	2.6	3.1	3.3

Table FT9c Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by size of school)

	100 or less students	101 - 500 students	501 - 1000 students	1001 or more students
Spelling	3.3	3.6	3.5	3.3
Writing	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.4
Reading	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.1
Oral Language	2.8	2.2	2.9	3.2

Table FT9d Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented
(mean scores by time at the school)

	my first year	1 to 3 years	4 to 6 years	7 to 10 years	more than 10 years
Spelling	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.4
Writing	3.8	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.6
Reading	3.3	3.1	3.2	2.9	3.2
Oral Language	2.5	3.0	2.4	2.4	3.7

Table FT9e Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented
(mean scores by special characteristics)

	PSP	ELAN	PCAP
Spelling	3.5	3.6	3.6
Writing	3.8	3.7	3.8
Reading	3.3	3.8	3.0
Oral Language	2.6	3.0	2.8

Table FT9f Ratings of the extent to which the First Steps literacy programme has been implemented (mean scores by teaching experience)

	my first year	1 to 3 years	4 to 6 years	7 to 10 years	more than 10 years
Spelling		4.0	3.2	3.5	3.5
Writing		3.7	3.5	3.6	3.6
Reading		3.7	3.0	3.3	3.1
Oral Language		3.0	2.7	2.5	2.8

PART D EFFECTS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Table FT10a Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning

	Much less progress with student learning	Less progress with student learning	No noticeable effect	Some assistance with student learning	Major assistance with student learning	Mean
Students' total language development			4.4	66.7	28.9	4.2
Spelling			12.5	54.5	33.0	4.2
Writing			7.8	46.7	45.6	4.4
Reading			19.3	56.6	24.1	4.1
Oral Language	1.5	2.9	30.9	35.3	29.4	3.9

Table FT10b Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by type of school)

	Primary	D High	Other
Students' total language development	4.2	4.7	4.3
Spelling	4.2	4.3	4.3
Writing	4.3	4.8	4.3
Reading	4.0	4.4	4.3
Oral Language	3.8	4.2	4.3

Table FT10c Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by size of school)

	100 or less students	101 - 500 students	501 - 1000 students	1001 or more students
Students' total language development	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3
Spelling	4.33	4.2	4.2	4.4
Writing	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.3
Reading	4.1	4.0	4.1	3.9
Oral Language	4.1	3.8	3.9	4.0

Table FT10d Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by time at the school)

	my first year	1 to 3 years	4 to 6 years	7 to 10 years	more than 10 years
Students' total language development	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.3
Spelling	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.0	4.1
Writing	4.8	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.4
Reading	4.4	3.9	4.2	3.9	3.9
Oral Language	4.1	3.8	3.9	4.0	3.8

Table FT10e Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by Special programs)

	PSP	ELAN	PCAP	Remote
Students' total language development	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.0
Spelling	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.0
Writing	4.4	4.4	4.6	5.0
Reading	4.3	4.5	4.1	4.0
Oral Language	4.1	4.2	3.9	5.0

Table FT10f Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by teaching experience)

	my first year	1 to 3 years	4 to 6 years	7 to 10 years	more than 10 years
Students' total language development		4.3	4.1	4.2	4.3
Spelling		4.7	4.1	4.4	4.2
Writing		4.0	4.2	4.6	4.4
Reading		4.3	3.9	4.3	4.0
Oral Language		3.7	3.8	4.1	3.8

Table FT10g Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student learning (by location)

	Metro	County	Remote
Students' total language development	4.3	4.2	4.3
Spelling	4.2	4.2	3.7
Writing	4.3	4.5	4.7
Reading	4.0	4.1	4.0
Oral Language	4.0	3.8	4.0

Table FT11 Changes to students' attitudes to learning that have occurred as a result of First Steps.

	Comment	No.
1	Students enthusiastic about language and reading programmes. Improved attitudes.	48
2	Students less teacher dependent - more independent.	27
3	Students more willing to 'have-a-go' - take risks.	21
4	Change in attitudes may not be solely due to FS but also introduction of full time school for 5 year olds.	12
5	Spelling programmes relevant to their work and writing - students respond positively.	10
6	Children able to work at own levels - less frustration.	10
7	Maybe children 'at risk' develop more confidence with coping with activities given.	7
8	Whole language approach linking all activities.	5
9	No dramatic improvement as strategies already in place.	5
10	Attitude to oral language has changed/improved.	4
11	Not noticeable as very little has been done using FS.	4
12	Writing frameworks and strategies produce positive results.	3
13	Can see the inter-relationships between components of the programme.	2
14	Freer activities - more relaxed atmosphere.	1
15	Students encouraged to learn from their mistakes.	1
16	PSP school and have had major literacy project in place to foster positive learning attitudes.	1
17	Strategies great for teaching informational skills.	1
18	Proof of long term benefits of FS will be the comparison with children who have not participated in FS.	1

Table FT11 Ratings the impact of the First Steps literacy programme on student student attitude to and confidence in each aspect of language

	Not covered	Much less positive	Less positive	No effect	More positive	Much more positive	Mean
Students' total language development	4.3			15.7	66.3	18.0	4.0
Spelling	5.4			11.4	67.0	21.6	4.1
Writing	3.2			10.0	66.7	23.3	4.1
Reading	7.5			24.4	61.6	14.0	3.9
Oral Language	26.9			29.4	51.5	19.1	3.9

Table FT12 Examples where First Steps has helped individual students

	Comments	Freq
1	Language and reading programme develops positive attitudes.	17
2	Less able students not helped at all.	17
3	Where success is not a right or wrong answer encourages those at risk to 'have-a-go' and become more confident.	15
4	Spelling activities/strategies have been particularly useful in less able students.	14
5	Child able to present a written piece in a logical sequence thanks to frameworks and strategies.	13
6	Child not willing to talk in large class group eventually gained confidence using 'what, where, when etc. and other strategies.	12
7	Continua has helped identify specific areas of concern.	8
8	It has been useful to show concerned parents what a child can do on a continuum.	6
9	Continuum focuses on positive results.	6
10	Spelling journals cater for all students, 'at risk' to very bright.	5
11	Selection of appropriate and stimulating strategies.	5
12	More able students can advance at own pace on individual programmes.	4
13	Individual group work now carried out more willingly.	3
14	Under achievers feel less segregated as working at own level.	3
15	With the emphasis on oral language the transference to writing is amazing.	3
16	Programme has shown the importance of slowing down for weaker children.	2
17	Word banks have helped 'very beginning writer' to use strategies eg. phase matching on ABC to consolidate skills.	1
18	Class charts identifying spelling strategies have helped individuals.	1
19	FS has helped almost all children bot 'at risk' and those developing normally.	1
20	Use only as a strategy and structure to teach SOS.	1

Table FT13 Ratings the impact of First Steps on students' use of the following strategies

	Not covered	No change	Very little change	Moderate amount of change	Considerable degree of change	Major change	Mean
Reading							
Meaning making strategies	13.0	1.2	14.8	46.9	32.1	4.9	3.3
Word identification strategies	13.0		17.3	45.7	32.1	4.9	3.3
Problem solving strategies	12.9	1.2	11.1	51.9	29.6	6.2	3.3
Writing							
Planning strategies	9.7		4.8	44.0	39.3	11.9	3.6
Editing strategies	9.7	1.2	8.3	38.1	41.7	10.7	3.5
Text structures	8.6	1.2	1.2	37.6	38.8	21.2	3.8
Overall writing strategies	5.4		3.4	38.6	46.6	11.4	3.7
Spelling							
Spelling strategies	8.6		3.5	36.5	44.7	15.3	3.7
Spelling journal	23.7	1.4	5.6	19.7	47.9	25.4	3.9

PART D EFFECTS ON THE SCHOOL

Table FT14 The effect of First Steps on the school as a whole

	Comment	Freq
1	Staff supportive.	31
2	Use in school development planning.	19
3	Allows teachers to get clearer understanding of where children are at form continuas/learning development.	18
4	School divided into those that have embraced FS and those that either ignore change or resent having it imposed upon them.	16
5	Communication between staff more effective as criteria clearly identified at each level. A focus for evaluation planning and school development.	15
6	Uniformity with teaching strategies and evaluation.	15
7	There is added stress and confusion in some teachers as more work involved.	12
8	Some continuas adopted by school.	10
9	Many teachers do not know how to use FS continua for further planning.	8
10	Children benefit greatly.	8
11	School reporting has changed/ under review.	8
12	FS continua has provided information for MIS.	6
13	Placing children on continua takes a long time.	6
14	Use of Continua has made for uniform assessment to a degree.	5
15	Staff do not have time to discuss FS processes and how it is progressing or for consolidation and revision.	4
16	More effective environment and more effective learning.	4
17	Better grasp of what whole school is doing.	4
18	Able to look at specific areas of need that need to be covered.	4
19	Does nothing for those that ignore change.	3
20	Not a great deal.	3
21	Consolidates what some teachers already know.	3
22	FS has some very practical application.	3
23	Junior school using continua to monitor student progress and as a basis for reports.	3
24	Positive "buzz" as teachers implement all strategies.	2

Table FT15 How teachers feel about First Steps

	Comments	Freq
1	Very positive response. Excellent, fantastic, etc.	49
2	Positive attitude towards philosophy, ideas and strategies.	42
3	Continuum helpful in evaluation.	19
4	Funding must be maintained to ensure continuation of FS as a resource for teachers.	12
5	Generally more time needed.	11
6	Not all strategies/activities are new.	11
7	Increases workload but worthwhile.	9
8	Teaching has improved as a result of FS.	8
9	Too much emphasis place on continua.	6
10	Continua valuable indicators to child development.	7
11	No evidence that it helps less able students.	4
12	We need to be aware that although learning is development there are other reasons for non-achievement	4
13	Impossible to take on all subject areas at once.	4
14	Parent pack good idea as it gives parents examples of what children might be doing and helpful hints to move children on.	3
15	Very difficult aspect will be the use of the new Longman Cheshire books as many teachers inserviced in Education Department books and plotting is done on these.	3
16	Has given confidence in planning whole language approach.	3
17	Not sure about continua - inconsistencies.	3
18	Needs to start in Grade 1 and be sequential.	2
19	Some teachers have found it valuable to use direct instruction on less able students.	2
20	Unfortunate that FS has been sold to private corp as many teachers will not benefit due to cost involved.	2
21	Great programme if data gathered is used correctly.	2
22	The general package is good as a 'guide' to teaching. Feel qualified to use aspects that I agree and feel comfortable with.	2
23	Is it being covered at University and colleges.	1
24	The programme in-servicing has improved greatly since beginning.	1
25	Does not give Aboriginal ESL students necessary skills.	1

FL025271

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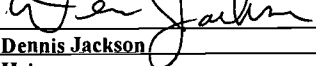
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